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Editorial

Gwendolyn Bellinger and Harrison Croft

The increasing workload that many—often tenuously employed—academic staff face rears its ugly head in many arenas. These deprivations have been keenly felt here, too. The search for peer reviewers for our featured research articles was a long and slow process. On this occasion, perhaps more than any other in the journal's recent history, we are especially grateful to the anonymous peer reviewers who said yes, for their generosity and collegiality, for supporting junior scholars in their endeavours to enter the world of academic publishing through our journal. We are, of course, unable to offer any compensation for this kind of work: work that takes time away from busy schedules, work that creeps in and fills niches during mid-semester breaks, in the evenings, or lunch breaks. These are the invisible labours upon which so much of the field's uniquely pernicious form of exploitation is built. We despair to reflect on our own complicity here, but we also look forward with cautious hope to a future publishing pipeline that rejects these exploitations.

Volume 25 features a research article on the 1968 Kenyan Asian Crisis in Great Britain. This thoughtful essay by Zaki Rehman is excellently crafted and gives careful consideration to the subject's historiography. We are delighted to present this complex issue, expertly told, in this forum. Nima Mohammadi's article on the Nazi aesthetic, as materialised at the Berlin Olympiad, the Nuremberg Rallies, and the oeuvre of Leni Riefenstahl, offers new insights into the histories of cultural convergence of value to scholars of twentieth-century Germany. Generous and perceptive book reviews by Daisy Bailey and Harrison Croft round out this edition.

Eras is dedicated, as always, to providing an international platform for honours, postgraduate, and early career researchers. This issue continues our commitment to the integrity of the field and to its nascent researchers. We would like to thank our reviewers, authors, and the

members of our board who have finished their time at *Eras* since our last publication. Their contributions are what make *Eras* possible.

Citizenship Law, Race, and Decolonisation: Rethinking the 1968 Kenyan Asian Crisis

Zaki Rehman

University of Oxford

Abstract: *In 1968, the British Parliament passed the Commonwealth Immigrants Act, which aimed to halt the immigration of Kenyan Asians into Great Britain, rendering them effectively stateless. This historiographical essay analyses the literature on the Kenyan Asian crisis. It integrates disconnected historiographies through a comparative methodology that rejects the conventional boundaries of geography and periodisation, specifically through using global and long-term approaches. In doing so, the essay uses the history of citizenship to address debates on how minorities such as the Kenyan Asians, created by empire, relate to the nation. The essay presents future directions of inquiry for further research on citizenship, race, and decolonisation from comparative perspectives.*

Keywords: *Kenyan Asians; citizenship law; decolonisation; race; migration; minority*

Introduction

In 1968, the British Parliament passed the Commonwealth Immigrants Act. Its purpose was to stop the immigration of the Kenyan South Asian community into Britain. After the Partition of India in 1947 and Kenya's independence in 1963, many of these Asians found themselves without citizenship of any of the incipient postcolonial nations of Kenya, India, or Pakistan. Instead, they retained their imperial status as British "Citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies" (hereafter CUKC) citizens. After facing increasing discrimination in Kenya, the Asians were using this CUKC citizenship to immigrate to Britain. The 1968 Act aimed to halt such immigration. It revoked the right of entry of these CUKC citizens on account of their race, making 80,000 Kenyan Asians

effectively stateless. Having imagined themselves as British, Kenyan, and Indian at various points throughout the twentieth century, in 1968, the Kenyan Asians belonged nowhere.

This historiographical essay argues that the current literature fails to appreciate the significance of the 1968 Kenyan Asian crisis. It does so by integrating, reframing, and therefore reinterpreting the as-yet disconnected existing historiographies through two fundamental methodological shifts. Firstly, a long-term approach allows the bridging of the colonial and postcolonial periods. Secondly, a global perspective can merge the regional work on Britain, East Africa, and South Asia. This shift in approach indicates that the eventual exclusion of Kenyan Asians in 1968 was far from inevitable. It was instead a result of the contingent transition from hierarchical but inclusive forms of imperial citizenship to self-determining yet exclusive ideas of the national citizen.

The Kenyan Asian crisis has been dealt with extensively from the British perspective. There is a large literature exploring how New Commonwealth immigration sparked panicked debates in the former metropole over race and nation. Regarding citizenship, Dummett and Nicol state that a clear understanding of citizenship failed to emerge during the imperial period due to the lack of a codified constitution.[1] Further, Rieko Karatani suggests that the legal definition of the British citizen until as late as 1981 remained purposefully vague in order to enable the inclusion of a vast array of peoples into a single empire.[2] Randall Hansen and Kathleen Paul have also debated the extent to which the introduction of immigration legislation after World War Two was motivated by racism or pragmatism.[3] Most recently, Ian Sanjay Patel has summarised these previous insights in his important work of popular history.[4] Yet, however sophisticated this

[1] Ann Dummett and Andrew Nicol, *Subjects, Citizens, Aliens, and Others: Nationality and Immigration Law* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1990).
[2] Rieko Karatani, *Defining British Citizenship: Empire, Commonwealth and Modern Britain* (London: Routledge, 2002).
[3] For racism, see Kathleen Paul, *Whitewashing Britain: Race and Citizenship in the Post-War Era* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997); for pragmatism, see Randall Hansen, *Citizenship and Immigration in Post-War Britain: The Institutional Origins of a Multicultural Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
[4] Ian Sanjay Patel, *We're Here Because You Were There: Immigration and the end of Empire* (London: Verso, 2021).

extensive literature's analysis of British policy is, it is inevitably lacking in Kenyan and South Asian perspectives.

Whilst less comprehensive, there is also scholarship on the significance of 1968 for the postcolonial Kenyan nation. Most early work on the Asians was produced by eyewitnesses and is dominated by teleological narratives of Asians either as exploitative capitalists or victims of African nationalism.[5] Other work on Kenyan Asians locates them only within a national framework, ignoring their diasporic affiliations to their Indian homeland.[6] National histories of Kenya also only mention the Asians in the context of their exclusion. For a long time, ethnographer Donald Rothchild's early scholarship on "racial bargaining" was the most insightful, particularly in the way that it provided equal weight to the perspectives of both the Asian and Kenyan communities.[7] This remained the case until Sana Aiyar's excellent monograph highlighted the contingent nature of the Asian position in Kenya. Aiyar uses a transnational perspective that also bridges independence's divide to demonstrate the competing political claims that simultaneously created moments of inter-racial solidarity and discourses of racial difference. This essay builds on Aiyar's methodology, whilst pushing the value of a comparative approach to the history of citizenship even further.[8]

The perspective of the nascent Indian and Pakistani nations on their Kenyan diasporas is rarely, if ever, considered. The majority of the literature on citizenship in post-independence South Asia has focused on how the forced migration of partition in 1947 shaped ideas of rights and citizenship for everyday people. Furthermore, Niraja Jayal Gopal's monograph on Indian citizenship only tangentially mentions diasporic Indians.[9] While Sarah Ansari has addressed the ramifications of the 1948 British Nationality Act for South Asians in East Africa, she has focused

[5] For example, see J. M. Nazareth, *Brown Man, Black Country: A Peep into Kenya's Freedom Struggle* (New Delhi: Tidings Publications, 1981).
[6] See Dana Seidenberg, *Uhuru and the Kenya Indians: The Role of a Minority Community in Kenya Politics, 1939–1963* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1983).
[7] Donald Rothchild, *Racial Bargaining in Independent Kenya: A Study of Minorities and Decolonisation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973).
[8] Sana Aiyar, *Indians in Kenya: The Politics of Diaspora* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).
[9] Niraja Jayal Gopal, *Citizenship and its Discontents: An Indian History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

exclusively on the perspective of British policy.[10] Only Deborah Sutton's two ground-breaking articles have begun to explain the Indian perspective on their Kenyan diaspora.[11] Historians have yet to broach the perspective of Pakistan. As with Kenya, ideas of Indian or Pakistani national citizenship are yet to be compared with those of the development of British national or, more interestingly, older forms of British imperial citizenship.

Each of these existing historiographical perspectives is not necessarily inaccurate in and of themselves, but their respective parochial focuses on particular polities—namely the British empire/nation, or the Indian, Kenyan, and Pakistani nations—miss out on a broader picture. The first section of this essay surveys the literature regarding the establishment of British imperial citizenship up to the 1948 British Nationality Act. The second follows the literature concerning the various attempts to eradicate empire through national citizenship, culminating in the 1968 crisis. This allows the final section to rethink the eventual exclusion of the Kenyan Asian minority through two comparisons that transcend the usual boundaries of both geography and periodisation. Firstly, it compares the ways in which Kenyan Asians fit, or more accurately did not fit, into the incipient national citizenships of Kenya, India, and Britain. Secondly, it compares these national citizenships with the forms of British imperial citizenship which they replaced.

Political scientist Mahmood Mamdani theorises minorities such as the Kenyan Asians who were neither white settler nor African native as "subject races".[12] A comparative approach to the 1968 crisis, as adopted in this essay, highlights the complexity and contingency with which such categories were constructed in different historical contexts. These comparisons reinforce the observation of historian Frederick Cooper that citizenship is not a static contract that allocates a cohesive package of political rights but a dynamic institution constantly negotiated between

[10] Sarah Ansari, "Subjects or Citizens?: India, Pakistan, and the 1948 British Nationality Act," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 41, no. 2 (2013): 285–312.
[11] Deborah Sutton, "Divided and Uncertain Loyalties: Partition, Indian Sovereignty and Contested Citizenship in East Africa, 1948–1955," *Interventions* 9, no 2 (2007): 276–288; Deborah Sutton, "Imagined Sovereignty and the Indian Subject: Partition and Politics beyond the Nation, 1948–1960," *Contemporary South Asia* 19, no. 4 (2011): 409–425.
[12] Mahmood Mamdani, "Beyond Settler and Native as Political Identities: Overcoming the Political Legacies of Colonialism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43, no. 4 (2001): 651–664.

individuals and their polities.[13] Having said this, the comparisons also illustrate that while "subject races" could exist within the contradictions of imperial citizenship, they came to be excluded by the coherence of national citizenship.

The Inclusive Contradictions of Imperial Citizenship

British Sub-Imperial Citizens?

Imperial citizenship has been a popular topic amongst historians. For example, Daniel Gorman has explored how imperial citizenship was debated within the white Dominions, whilst Sukanya Banerjee has provided a comparable study in reference to Indians throughout the empire.[14] Radhika Mongia uses a similarly broad geographical approach to demonstrate how colonial migration was intrinsically intertwined with defining ideas of the national citizen and the sovereignty of the modern state.[15] This work has proved so interesting because, in legal terms, "imperial citizenship" did not in fact exist in this period. Instead, the diverse peoples under British rule were united in universal subjecthood under the monarch. But despite this technicality, subjects used the discourse of "imperial citizenship" to make claims as "Britons", and in particular, their right to travel across the empire.

Most relevant for this essay, the phenomenon of "claim-making" as British imperial citizens occurred frequently across the Indian Ocean and has been explored in monographs by Robert Blyth and Thomas Metcalf. These historians have highlighted the work of Indian merchants like Alibhai Mulla Jeevanjee who considered themselves sub-imperial partners with the British Empire. Such merchants claimed that they were agents of "modernity" who would civilize the natives and worked with the Indian Government to plot a "colony for India" in former

[13] See Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship, Inequality, and Difference: Historical Perspectives* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018).
[14] Daniel Gorman, *Imperial Citizenship: Empire and the Question of Belonging* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006); Sukanya Banerjee, *Becoming Imperial Citizens: Indians in Late Victorian Empire* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).
[15] Radhika Mongia, *Indian Migration and Empire: A Colonial Genealogy of the Modern State* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018).

German East Africa. The seemingly deracialised nature of British subjecthood allowed Asians to subvert the binary between coloniser and colonised. Particularly during the 1890s, British colonial administrators agreed that Asians would be vital to British success. As declared by Harry Hamilton Johnson, the special commissioner to Uganda, East Africa would become the "America of the Hindu".[16] Far from the exclusion of 1968, the inclusive nature of imperial subjecthood encouraged the Kenyan Asians to imagine themselves as British citizens.

However, the role of Asian sub-imperialists in Kenya was extremely contested. After 1902, White settlers from Europe and South Africa were offered tracts of Kenyan land. According to historian Dane Kennedy, rather than "a colony for India", these settlers imagined making Kenya a "white man's country" in the manner of the Dominions.[17] The arrival of White settlers inevitably challenged the Asian claim to be sub-imperial British citizens and aptly demonstrates the racialised political hierarchy that was embedded within the supposed universality of British subjecthood. In contrast to the colonial administrators of the late-nineteenth century, these settlers argued that Asian racial inferiority precluded them from taking part in the imperial project. Historians of race and empire have demonstrated that racial thinking came to the fore in the British imperial mind in this period.[18] This in turn led to debates around the political rights of Indians and the contradictions of imperial citizenship.[19]

As Gorman has stated, whilst the metropolitan Colonial Office was committed to maintaining the façade of equality, the Dominions were granted the power to introduce their own immigration legislation.[20] They did so, and discriminated on the grounds of race. Many historians have debated Indian immigration, race, and citizenship within the white Dominions in different

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[16] See Robert Blyth, *The Empire of the Raj: India, Eastern Africa and the Middle East, 1858–1947* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Thomas Metcalf, *Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860–1920* (Berkely, CA: University of California Press, 2008).
[17] Dane Kennedy, *Islands of White: Settler Society and Culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1800–1939* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987).
[18] Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
[19] Mark Frost, "Imperial Citizenship or Else: Liberal Ideals and the Indian Unmaking of Empire, 1890–1919," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 46, no. 5 (2018): 845–873.
[20] Gorman, *Imperial Citizenship*.

contexts.[21] The recurring theme is that the legislation of the increasingly autonomous and independent Dominions made the implicit racial distinctions within British subjecthood more visible. The decolonisation of the Dominions made the racialised hierarchy within the supposedly universal imperial citizenship clear for the rest of the empire. The British metropole would then adopt the well-established tactic of legislating away the rights of imperial citizenship to revoke Asians' right of entry in 1968.

In 1960s Britain, White settlers in Kenya saw Asian immigration as a fundamental threat to their "white man's country". As historian Christopher Youé has outlined, the European settlers were alarmed by the inaction of the Colonial Office, leading them to threaten a violent rebellion in 1923. In a revealing paradox, these rebels, although acting seditiously against the Crown, justified their coup in loyalist terms. They argued that they were "more white" than their colonial superiors residing in the safety of the metropole.[22] In this sense, the opponents were not the Asians but MPs, since it was incumbent upon the British government to uphold White ideals while Indians were expected to pursue their own selfish ends. This perspective aligns with historian Bill Schwarz's work. Schwarz argues that it was in the settler frontier where the idea of "whiteness" was constructed and would be transported back to the metropole only upon decolonisation and mass non-White immigration after World War Two.[23]

Here we can draw parallels between the potential rebellion in Kenya in 1923 and the Notting Hill Race Riots of 1958 in Britain, which are addressed in every monograph on British post-war immigration. In both cases, the British were driven to violence because they believed that their Whiteness was threatened by non-White immigration. This highlights that the nominal equality of imperial subjecthood, whilst enabling the inclusion of diverse peoples into political hierarchy, was also prone to producing crises of Whiteness that necessitated explicit differentiation

[21] For one example, see Seema Sohi, *Echoes of Mutiny: Race, Surveillance, and Indian Anticolonialism in North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), particularly chapter four.
[22] Christopher Youé, "The Threat of Settler Rebellion and the Imperial Predicament: The Denial of Indian Rights in Kenya, 1923," *Canadian Journal of History* 12, no. 3 (1978): 347–360.
[23] Bill Schwarz, *The White Man's World*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

between these imperial citizens on racial grounds. The universality of imperial citizenship was only possible when accompanied by racialised politics. For colonial Kenya, this reckoning culminated in the 1923 Devonshire Declaration. In the name of "African paramountcy", the Declaration established a racialised Asian minority between White settlers and African natives. The inclusion allowed by the nominal universalism of the British Empire came at the price of racialised political hierarchy. Deborah Hughes has shown that Indians protested this decision, but the ambiguities of imperial citizenship could hold this contradiction.[24]

Afro-Asian Anti-Colonial Solidarity

From the 1930s, disillusion with the rights afforded by imperial citizenship caused Asians to reject "Britishness" altogether. For Sana Aiyar, rather than claiming political equality through imperial loyalism, the Asians began to demand it as independent Kenyans.[25] Accordingly, Asians criticised the racial hierarchy of colonial rule in Kenya, opening up the language of universal equality and therefore Afro-Asian racial solidarity. For example, the East African Indian Congress, initially founded for Asian interests, began to focus more broadly on Kenyan issues and even some explicitly African ones. This demonstrates the obvious problems of teleological histories that presume Afro-Asian conflict, exemplified by Paul Theroux's "Hating the Asians".[26] By contrast, Aiyar's work makes clear that, at this point, many Asians were putting the African first. Asians could be part of a postcolonial Kenya, but they must not assume any privileges. Admittedly, such liberalism would become strained by the 1950s as independence drew closer.

In the 1920s, the rejection of British imperial citizenship presented an opening for Afro-Asian racial solidarity in which Asians could imagine being Kenyan. Throughout the 1940s, Africans showed a similar willingness to co-operate in the anti-colonial struggle. As historian

[24] For Indian protest, see Deborah Hughes, "Kenya, India, and the British Empire Exhibition of 1924," *Race & Class* 47, no. 4 (2006): 66–85.
[25] Aiyar, *Indians in Kenya.*
[26] Paul Theroux, "Hating the Asians," *Transition* 75, no. 76 (1997): 60–73.

Margret Frenz argues, the postcolonial imperative of nation-building has obscured the transnational collaboration of anti-colonial resistance.[27] Harry Thuku, the earliest African proponent of anti-colonial Afro-Asian collaboration,was explicit that it was White settlers, rather than Asians, who were hindering African progress. Thuku saw Asians and Africans as united in a fight for equal rights with Europeans. In this vein, Thuku took on the mantle of the "Gandhi of Kenya", aiming to replicate the Mahatma's work in South Africa where there was also a significant Asian population, an undertaking explored by historian Jon Soske.[28] Thuku was not alone in appreciating Indian tutelage, especially after independence in 1947.

Indeed, it is revealing to compare the anti-colonial Afro-Asian collaboration in Kenya with other East African countries. Tanzania, in particular, has been the source of a rich historical literature, as exemplified by Ronald Aminzade's exploration of the politics of citizenship within the Tanzanian nation.[29] Similarly, historian Ned Bertz has argued for a transnational approach to race in Tanzania, which was formed against a backdrop of ever-changing notions of nationhood and diaspora.[30] Another important work is James Brennan's study of racial politics and nationalism in Dar es Salaam. Brennan argues that, unlike in Kenya, Indian anti-colonial politics had a limited effect in Tanzania, mostly because of its condescending nature. He suggests that such condescension revealed the hierarchical nature of the cosmopolitanism of the Indian Ocean world. Accordingly, Indian nationalists in Tanganyika rarely engaged in African political concerns.[31] This clearly contrasts with Kenya, where a common enemy, the European settlers, pushed Indian leaders to engage with African grievances.

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[27] Margret Frenz, "Swaraj for Kenya, 1949–1965: The Ambiguities of Transnational Politics," *Past & Present* 218, no. 8 (2013): 151–177.
[28] Jon Soske, *Internal Frontiers: African Nationalism and the Indian Diaspora in Twentieth-Century South Africa* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2017).
[29] Ronald Aminzade, *Race, Nation and Citizenship in Postcolonial Africa: The Case of Tanzania* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
[30] Ned Bertz, *Diaspora and Nation in the Indian Ocean: Transnational Histories of Race and Space in Tanzania* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2015).
[31] James Brennan, *Taifa: Making Nation and Race in Urban Tanzania* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2012).

This comparison indicates the importance of a settler European "other" not present in Tanzania or Uganda, in allowing Afro-Asian collaboration in Kenya. In the late colonial Kenyan context, collaboration with an already successful South Asian independence movement offered legitimacy to Kenyans. In the 1950s, nationalists such as Kenyatta emphasised the need to co-operate with Asians. In 1951, the Kenyan African Union and Congress passed a joint resolution denouncing communal representation that would harm their collective consciousness. The universalising aspirations for equality allowed leaders to cross racial boundaries. Far from exploiting Kenyan indigeneity, Asians could be united with Africans as "non-Europeans". This unity reached its zenith at the Kaloleni Hall meeting of April 1950, during which 20,000 Africans and Asians demanded immediate independence. Such examples suggest the need for further histories of south-south cooperation, conflict, and exchange that have thus far been obscured by Eurocentric lenses.

Historian Shobana Shankar's recent monograph, titled *An Uneasy Embrace*, offers one such example. It is a global intellectual history which moves from India to Africa, and even to African America, in order to explore the way race shaped Afro-Asian relations in the twentieth century.[32] Shankar expands the methodology used by Aiyar, Frenz, and Bertz regarding Asians in East Africa to a global stage. This literature's emphasis on contingency demonstrates that conflict was just as likely as cooperation. It is vital to highlight that, despite the cooperation that characterised the 1930s and 1940s, independence was far off during the Kaloleni Hall meeting. In this period, anti-colonialism remained an abstract project and did not necessitate a strict definition of who could be part of postcolonial Kenya. Instead, the absence of the obligation of defining postcolonial citizenship and the solely destructive nature of anti-colonial rhetoric at this point allowed Afro-Asian racial solidarity.

[32] Shobana Shankar, *An Uneasy Embrace: Africa, India, and the Spectre of Race* (London: Hurst, 2021).

Even in this earlier period, there were tensions regarding independence. Specifically, the rhetoric of the universal anti-colonial struggle could never fully bury the underlying tensions of the economic privilege enjoyed by Asians. As highlighted, whilst Asians existed below Europeans in the colonial hierarchy, they were also above Africans. In this vein, it is important to highlight Aiyar's observation that Asian shopkeepers, or *dukkawallahs*, were many Africans' most frequent interaction with the colonial enterprise.[33] Thus, the concept of African indigeneity against foreign economics emerged. This populist trope severely limited the potential for Afro-Asian solidarity and racialised tensions came to a boil during constitutional negotiations in the 1960s. The claims that Asians made to British imperial citizenship at the beginning of the twentieth century would make it more difficult to define Asians as postcolonial Kenyan national citizens upon independence.

Rejuvenating the Imperial Contradiction

The abstract ambiguity of anti-colonial resistance and the absence of the obligation to define a postcolonial citizen enabled Afro-Asian solidarity. This ambiguity should be compared with British imperial subjecthood. Both attempted to be inclusive enterprises and both remained vague about to whom subjecthood applied and what it provided. Establishing and dismantling the British empire in Kenya teased the potential for racial collaboration, enabling Asians to imagine themselves as either British or Kenyan. From the British perspective, this ambiguity was re-established in the 1948 British Nationality Act which defined citizenship as a legal category for the first time. Multiple historical monographs from Paul, Hansen, and Karatani have covered the policy debates behind the transition from universal British subjecthood, to British imperial citizenship in 1948, and finally, to British national citizenship in 1981. Perhaps the most important

[33] Aiyar, *Indians in Kenya*, 76.

point regarding the 1948 Act came most emphatically from Randall Hansen, regarding its fundamentally imperial nature.

The British Nationality Act was prompted by the increasing nationalism of the Dominions and, specifically, the Canadian Citizenship Act of 1946. The Act declared that Canadians would possess British subjecthood as a consequence of their Canadian citizenship. This was a fundamental break in the universality of British subjecthood and, therefore, a threat to imperial unity. To rectify this, the British Nationality Act created two categories. Citizens of the Independent Commonwealth Countries (CICC) would follow the Canadian model, gaining British citizenship through citizenship of their own independent nations. The rest of the empire, such as the Kenyan Asians, would be Citizens of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth (CUKC). The uniformity of subjects was maintained in two categories of citizenship. Both categories had the same rights of movement. Whilst Dominions were able to introduce their own immigration legislation, the same right of entrance into Britain was available to a Kenyan as it was a Canadian. By including all British subjects in a universal Commonwealth, the 1948 Act consolidated the contradictions inherent to British imperial subjecthood in the language of citizenship.

In fact, the British Nationality Act provided an even more blatant contradiction because it held together newly independent Dominions with persistently subservient colonies. Both contemporaries and subsequent historians have criticised the extreme liberalism of the 1948 Act. Kathleen Paul has highlighted that the immediate reception from Tory MPs demonstrates that contemporaries were more than aware of the contradictions between the universality of British imperial citizenship and racialised ideas of who was "British".[34] It is important to highlight the continuities of this tension as experienced in 1920s Kenya and 1986 Britain. Historians working from a national perspective, such as Vaughan Bevan, have criticised this supposedly illogical Act for creating a web of contradictions that hindered future attempts to restrict immigration.[35] The

[34] Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, 21–23.
[35] Vaughan Bevan, *The Development of British Immigration Law* (London: Routledge, 1986), 113.

foundations for the Kenyan Asian crisis, as well as the broader debates about non-White immigration, were laid by the universality of the 1948 British Nationality Act.

However, as much as Hansen and Paul disagree on the extent to which legislation was racially motivated, they both rightly concur that condemnations of the 1948 Act from the perspective of its consequences for immigration upon African decolonisation represent an anachronistically national conception of what was a fundamentally imperial interpretation of citizenship. The prospect of immigration from Africa was irrelevant to the Act. If immigration was considered at all, it was in an attempt to preserve existing inter-imperial White migration. From this perspective, that Britain was the only Commonwealth country not to introduce immigration restrictions actually reinforced the aims of the Act by reaffirming Britain as the imperial motherland. As Hansen explains, the 1948 British Nationality Act must be understood in the context of imperial rejuvenation.[36] Whilst its deracialised liberalism certainly laid the groundwork for the 1968 crisis, such migration was inconceivable in 1948, and the larger vision of universal imperial citizenship outweighed racialised difference. The Act formalised in the language of citizenship the imperial contradiction that had previously existed in that of subjecthood—racially stratified political rights within an inclusive and theoretically deracialised universality.

It is helpful to consider Frederick Cooper's comparison of the 1948 British Nationality Act with the French politics of citizenship in this period.[37] After the French metropole had fallen during World War Two, the eventual defeat of the Nazis in 1945 provided a window of opportunity for the colonised world as a new French republic had to be crafted from scratch. This process led to French colonial subjects possessing citizenship rights between 1946 and 1960.[38] Further comparative work on ideas of citizenship across empires would doubtless be very fruitful. While the British experiment with imperial citizenship was less radical than that of the French

[36] Hansen, *Citizenship*, 36–56.
[37] Cooper, *Citizenship, Inequality, and Difference*, 120.
[38] Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945–1960* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014).

Constitution of 1946, this comparison underlines the contradictions of imperial inclusion were as vital as ever in the post-war period. Just as the abstract nature of Afro-Asian anti-colonialism in the 1940s allowed Asians to imagine themselves as part of an independent Kenya, the ambiguity of CUKC citizenship maintained that Asians were, in a sense, British.

The Exclusive Coherence of National Citizenship

Indian Citizens outside the Nation?

The 1950s marked a turning point. In stark contrast to the effective statelessness of 1968, it now seemed that anti-colonial nationalisms would produce multiple citizenship options for Kenyan Asians. But while the new postcolonial nations eradicated the political hierarchy of imperial citizenship by conflating citizenship and rights, they would not prove so inclusive in their definition of the citizen. The first options were the newly independent Indian and Pakistani nations of South Asia after the independence and partition of India in 1947. There is a stark lack of literature concerning the incipient South Asian nations' perspective on their overseas diaspora. Joya Chatterjee, Sarah Ansari, and William Gould produced insightful work on how partition and the ensuing migration created the idea of the Indian and Pakistani citizen. While this work has brought to light the everyday experience of citizens themselves, it ignores extra-territorial Asians entirely.[39] Further, Niraja Jayal Gopal's monograph on Indian citizenship does not even mention the 1968 Kenyan Asian Crisis.

Beyond certain sections of Aiyar's monograph, the only existing scholarship on South Asian perspectives on their diaspora in Kenya consists of two articles by historian Deborah Sutton. She reveals the fascinating story of how, immediately after 1947, the Indian state imagined the Kenyan Asians as their own national citizens that would epitomise a reified "Indianness". Because of the communal traumas of partition, the definition of who was Indian and who was Pakistani

[39] Joya Chatterji, "South Asian Histories of Citizenship, 1946–1970," *The Historical Journal* 55, no. 4 (2012): 1049–1071; Sarah Ansari and William Gould, *Boundaries of Belonging: Localities, Citizenship and Rights in India and Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

became an extremely contested process. Sutton explains how the fact that the Asian diaspora in Kenya had not explicitly experienced this rupture meant that they provided a way to access "Indianness" that was untainted by partition's division. The very extra-territoriality, or "Africanness", of the Kenyan Asians enabled their construction as the mythically perfect Indian national citizen.[40] Unlike the ambiguous inclusivity of British imperial citizenship, there were strict criteria to fulfil this utopian vision. The onus was on the Kenyan Asians to prove they could fulfil the requirements of being an Indian citizen outside the nation.

Between 1948 and 1955, Indian diplomats in Kenya used citizenship to regulate this contract. National citizenship was construed in instrumental terms by the state as a political tool that would supposedly secure the "Indianness" of its diaspora. Sutton demonstrates that the first requirement of Kenyan Asians as extra-territorial citizens was secularism or, in plainer terms, being non-Muslim. Unfortunately, we are yet to see any significant literature on the perspective of the Pakistani state on its Kenyan diaspora. If this emerges, it would provide an interesting comparison to Sutton. Broader work on the perspective of these new South Asian states on their diaspora in, for example, Tanzania or South Africa, would add to this picture. The second requirement of Kenyan Asians from the Indian state was a commitment to anti-imperialism. As Manu Bhagavan has demonstrated, Jawaharlal Nehru was intent on spreading the universal message of anti-imperialism throughout Africa and make his vision of "One World" a reality.[41]

With this aim in mind, Indians in East Africa were expected to form a collective vanguard to guide Africa to freedom through an orthodoxy of anti-imperial resistance derived from a re-invented Indian freedom struggle. Karatani makes the interesting comparison that, immediately after 1947, the British were similarly keen to claim diasporic Indians as British CUKC citizens.[42] In this context, the debate over Kenyan Asian citizenship represented that for anti-colonial independence. As the British attempted to rejuvenate universal imperial citizenship through the

[40] See Deborah Sutton, "Imagined Sovereignty".
[41] Manu Bhagavan, *The Peacemakers: India and the Quest for One World* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
[42] Karatani, *Defining British Citizenship,* 162–163.

British Nationality Act, so the Indian state attempted to mobilise its diaspora as ideal anti-colonial citizens. For the Indian nation, these citizens would be free from division, either religious or, more significantly in the Kenyan context, racial. For example, the Indian High Commissioner in Nairobi, Apa Pant, was emphatic in his demand for Kenyan Asians to reject racial reservations. The Indian nation would repent for the religious communalism of its own independence by using extra-territorial citizens to ensure the lack of racial division in that of Africa.

The evident importance of these diasporic Kenyan Asians for the Indian nation is reminiscent of Ria Kapoor's recent work regarding the significance of the refugee for the constitution of the Indian citizen.[43] This suggests the broader significance, or threat, of the extra-territorial for the nation. The complications of defining the postcolonial self through extra-territorial national citizenship produced a paradox in which Kenyan Asians could only become Indian through complete commitment to Africa. Unsurprisingly, it was a commitment to which the Asians failed to live up. From the mid-1950s, the state began to abandon this mission altogether. Showing striking similarity to the Kenyan government after 1963, the Indian state feared that Kenyan Asians were disingenuously claiming citizenship, masquerading as "paper citizens". Therefore, despite the fact that the Kenyan Asians were legally able to register for Indian citizenship, the Indian state found imaginative ways to circumvent this right, most prominently in what Sutton terms the "princely state loophole".

Specifically, because the framing of the Indian constitution in 1950 preceded the incorporation of the princely states into the republic, immediate rights to citizenship under Article 5 of the Indian constitution only applied to those who had inhabited British India. Whilst having little domestic significance, this distinction provided the principle for the refusal of Indian citizenship in East Africa.[44] In 1955, the exclusion of the Kenyan Asians was finalised in the Indian Nationality Act, which explicitly forbade dual citizenship. Such exclusion was justified by the

[43] Ria Kapoor, *Making Refugees in India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).
[44] Sutton, "Divided and Uncertain Loyalties," 286.

apparent lack of Kenyan Asian commitment to African independence. By 1955, the Indian state's disapprobation pre-empted the much better-known racialised rhetoric used by both African nationalists and White settlers in condemning the Kenyan Asians as a parasitic "in between". While the ambiguities of British imperial citizenship could provide this third space, the Indian Nationality Act signalled the emergence of exclusive ideas of the national citizen that would, in 1968, leave eighty thousand Kenyan Asians effectively stateless.

Africa for Africans

Like the developing image of the Indian citizen, conceptions of the Kenyan national citizen similarly lacked the ambiguous inclusivity of British imperial citizenship. Afro-Asian racial collaboration had always been undermined by economic inequality under British rule. These ideas are well-established and have been explored in depth by ethnographer Donald Rothchild.[45] They have also been touched on in multiple monographs that examine postcolonial Kenya from a national perspective.[46] Although Aiyar and Frenz's work on the 1930s and 1940s has demonstrated that Afro-Asian conflict was far from inevitable, the definition of the postcolonial citizen was not able to hold the economic tension within the abstract rhetoric of anti-colonial solidarity. During constitutional negotiations at Lancaster House in the 1960s, racialised criticism of Asian economic privilege increased. An emphasis on indigeneity developed and multi-racial ideas of constitutional safeguards for Asians became increasingly unpopular. This critique of Asian economic exploitation of the "native" was far from a purely Kenyan phenomenon.

Racial animosity towards Asians in East Africa was arguably more explicit in Uganda, even though there has been comparatively less historical work on this topic than in Kenya. Richard Reid's recent monograph on the history of modern Uganda makes clear that, like in Kenya, many Asians who settled in Uganda were comparatively affluent and took advantage of the economic

[45] Rothchild, *Racial Bargaining*.
[46] For example, see Charles Hornsby, *Kenya: A History since Independence* (London: IB Tauris, 2012).

opportunities offered by the colonial frontier. Many Ugandans would come to regard the Asians with simmering resentment, as demonstrated by how the Uganda National Movement organized a trade boycott of "non-African" shops across Buganda and beyond in 1959. Like in Kenya, this animosity led to nationalisation, or "Africanisation", programmes after independence under President Obote. This later culminated in military dictator Idi Amin's announcement of the expulsion of 50,000 Asians as parasitic foreigners during his "economic war" in August 1972.[47] Chibuike Uche's 2017 article has provided new insights into the diplomatic aspects of this crisis.[48]

From the 1950s, such nativist rhetoric panicked the Asian community in Kenya. Despite the liberalism of the Kenyan Freedom Party, many Asians feared that the economic privileges that they had enjoyed under British rule would disappear. Aiyar highlights how Asian lawyer JM Nazareth demanded constitutional safeguards to protect the minority.[49] As exemplified by Robert Maxon's work, Kenya has provided a particularly productive site of scholarship on postcolonial constitution-making due to complications created by the racially stratified hierarchy that existed under the empire.[50] Historians have not necessarily realised, however, that, in a revealing irony, the Asians argued for their right to be protected in the Kenyan national constitution through the familiar language of economic superiority. They resurrected the early-twentieth-century arguments, explored by Blyth and Metcalf, regarding how Asian economic prosperity had built Kenya. The discourse that had been used to claim political rights as British imperial citizens at the start of the twentieth century returned on the eve of independence to make claims as Kenyan national citizens.

Asians seemingly did not realise that it was these claims as British imperial citizens that had made their place within the Kenyan nation suspect in the first place. By 1963, safeguards had been rejected in favour of full African democracy. Asians were not automatically made Kenyan citizens.

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[47] Richard Reid, *A History of Modern Uganda* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 225–237.
[48] Chibuike Uche, "The British Government, Idi Amin, and the Expulsion of British Asians from Uganda," *International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 19 no. 6 (2017): 818–836.
[49] Aiyar, *Indians in Kenya,* 254–260.
[50] Robert Maxon, *Kenya's Independence Constitution: Constitution-Making and End of Empire* (Lanham, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2011).

Instead, they were given the opportunity to register, conditional upon rejection of any other citizenship by 1965. In strictly legal terms, Asians were not excluded from Kenyan citizenship and many Asians did take this option. This is likely because, in 1964, Kenyatta showed signs of including Asians, calling on the newly independent nation to erase the difficulties of its history. But as illustrated by Kara Moskowitz's recent work on the plural and contested histories of citizenship, it is important to distinguish between the legal definition of citizenship and popular conceptions about who could be a citizen.[51] Increased violence, harassment, and deportations made it clear that Asians were not considered part of the Kenyan nation.

Even if Asians could technically become Kenyan citizens, many feared that their rights would not be secure in postcolonial Kenya. This explains why some Asians struggled to commit to Kenyan citizenship. Regardless of the theoretical emancipation provided by Kenyan independence, this emancipation was only valuable to those to whom it was afforded. Accordingly, many Kenyan Asians chose to remain within the known entity of a hierarchical British imperial citizenship rather than risk being excluded from the self-determining Kenyan nation. In a dramatic shift from the Afro-Asian solidarity of the 1940s, British imperial citizenship now seemed to offer more rights than that of postcolonial Kenya. This fear was justified and was shared by other minority ethnic groups, as explored in Samantha Balaton-Chrimes' work on the Nubian community in Kenya.[52] With Kenyatta's state facing internal ethnic divisions, the Asians were mobilised as an internal enemy against whom the true 'African' could be defined.

As a result, many Asians remained CUKC citizens. While the Kenyan constitution did not allow for discrimination on racial grounds, it did on those of citizenship. The unconstitutional but politically popular calls for "Africanisation" could be fulfilled by legislation that nominally only privileged citizens. Historian Peter Brooke has highlighted the overlooked fact that, during 1967,

[51] Kara Moskowitz, *Seeing Like a Citizen: Decolonisation, Development, and the Making of Kenya, 1945–1980* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2019).
[52] Samantha Balaton-Chrimes, *Ethnicity, Democracy and Citizenship in Africa: Political Marginalisation of Kenya's Nubians* (London: Routledge, 2015).

Asians who had temporarily travelled to the Indian subcontinent were now re-migrating.[53] Demonstrating striking parallels with the British metropole, the influx of Asian migration sharpened the racialised conception of the Kenyan national citizen. While this migration had, in fact, been taking place since the nineteenth century, the nation-state was not as conducive to such movement as empire. Kenya's 1967 Immigration Act made non-citizen Asians aliens. The 1968 Trade Licensing Act further endangered Asian business. While Kenyan national citizenship had eradicated the imperial contradictions by conflating citizenship and rights, it had done so in an exclusive manner.

There is sufficient literature explaining the process of "Africanisation" and the idea of the native in Kenya. One could point to the work of John Lonsdale on indigeneity and citizenship, for example.[54] But a comparative approach provides greater insight not only into parallels with other incipient postcolonial nations, but also with the imperial period. Although Kenya's laws eschewed colonial categories, the racist way in which they were applied partnered with populist rhetoric to continue the racialised definition of the Asian minority created by the empire. The fundamental difference was that the British had wanted to include Asians within imperial citizenship whilst denying them rights, whereas the Kenyan state sought to tacitly deny rights to make clear that Asians could not be Kenyan national citizens. Therefore, while the contradictions of imperial citizenship had been eliminated by the nation, the imperial practice of denying rights on racial grounds remained. As Asians feared for their livelihood in Kenya and were without Indian citizenship, a mass voluntary exodus to Britain began in 1967.

Defining Nation from Empire

[53] Peter Brooke, *Duncan Sandys and the Informal Politics of Britain's Late Decolonisation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 189.
[54] For example, see John Lonsdale, "Soil, Work, Civilisation, and Citizenship in Kenya," *Journal of East African Studies* 2 no. 2 (2008): 305–314.

By 1968, the options of the 1950s had disappeared. At the beginning of the twentieth century, in their attempt to be sub-imperialists, the Kenyan Asians looked to Britain. But in 1968, the British Empire was becoming a British nation. As highlighted, the 1948 British Nationality Act provided all CUKC citizens with the right of entry. However, throughout the 1950s, immigration to Britain from the New Commonwealth forced the metropole to confront such universalism. If, in 1948, the imperative of imperial unity had outweighed the racial tensions within CUKC citizenship, the immigration of the 1950s made this previously theoretical universalism increasingly present and tenuous. The postcolonial turn from the 1980s sparked the "new imperial history", which has since produced a large literature on how empire affected British national identity, particularly at the end of empire.[55] Regarding citizenship, the works already mentioned by Hansen, Paul, Karatani, and, more recently, Patel, are similarly relevant.

These historians have illustrated how Britain restricted the immigration of its citizens for the first time in 1962. However, because of a persistent belief in the Commonwealth and concern for the future of White settlers, Britain did not alter the 1948 Act's commitment to universal citizenship. A lingering desire to rule others hindered a coherent definition of the national self. Rather than fundamentally redefining CUKC citizenship, the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act introduced a system that implicitly privileged White citizens through passports. Entrance into Britain was allowed only to those whose passports had been issued by the British government, supposedly restricting non-White immigration from the New Commonwealth. Because many Asians had not taken up Kenyan citizenship after independence, their passports were, in fact, still issued by the British government. The complexities of defining a racialised British nation out of the ashes of universal imperial citizenship had provided a loophole, and it was through this loophole that Kenyan Asians were entering Britain throughout the 1960s.

[55] For example, see Andrew Thompson ed., *Britain's Experience of Empire in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

This was not an unforeseen possibility. In the South Asian context, Sarah Ansari has shown that, throughout the 1950s, the British government had negotiated with India and Pakistan to advocate inclusive citizenship laws for their diasporas that would prevent the British from being left with those unwanted by incipient African nations. Similar negotiations took place with the future Kenyan government before independence.[56] Unsurprisingly, the British could not persuade postcolonial nations to adopt the inclusive approach to citizenship that had facilitated their own imperial expansions. Nations such as Kenya and India were not looking to establish rule over others but to define a self over which they could rule. When this effort failed in 1963, Commonwealth Secretary Duncan Sandys explicitly assured the Kenyan Asians that they were entitled to the same rights as all British citizens. This was clearly not the case from the start, as highlighted by the special exceptions to the British Nationality Act of 1964, which explicitly provided White settlers in Kenya with extra security.

In 1968, there was significant sentiment that the British government should keep Sandy's promise. On the one hand, this represented lingering commitments to the imperial liberalism of earlier in the twentieth century, particularly to the Commonwealth. On the other, it represented the British government's pragmatic desire to avoid overt racism. As seen in Kenya, populist demands for an explicitly racialised national citizen were, for a time, resisted by either pragmatic or liberal restraint from the state. Yet, in 1968, the Commonwealth Immigrants Act removed the Kenyan Asian right of entry. As has been explored by Peter Brooke's monograph on Duncan Sandys which sheds new light on his role in the crisis, Sandys would lead the charge to close the "loophole" that he had himself created.[57] The Act was extremely controversial, both at the time and since. Historians have highlighted it as both a dramatic betrayal and a turning point, which, in a sense, it was. However, as demonstrated by this comparative review of the literature, the use of

[56] Ansari, "Subject or Citizens?"
[57] Brooke, *Duncan Sandys.*

immigration legislation to distinguish and discriminate between theoretically deracialised citizens was heavily precedented.

The exceptional notoriety of 1968 should be explained through two related differences. Firstly, the denial of rights came from the metropole rather than the colonial frontier. Secondly, this denial now appeared not in the context of empire but in an emerging international order of nation-states. As we have seen, the anti-colonial triumph of nations like Kenya and India established the norm that citizenship was synonymous with political rights. Further, the potential revocation of the Kenyan Asian right of entry was made more controversial by the fact that they had also been excluded from the new Kenyan and Indian states. In other words, it would leave the Kenyan Asians without a nation. The discriminatory nature of the 1968 Act was far from new. What had changed was not the longstanding imperial practice of discriminating between citizens, but instead the relatively novel international perception that an individual must be a citizen of a nation and that this citizen must be guaranteed the right of entry into this nation.[58] In 1968, the British were using an imperial tactic in a national world. Although the inclusivity of British imperial citizenship remained, the Kenyan Asians were no longer allowed to enter the British nation.

The Subject Race, Citizenship, and Decolonisation

Having now surveyed the existing literature, the third and final section uses a comparative approach to provide a critique of the existing historiographies with the ultimate aim of using the 1968 Kenyan Asian Crisis to think anew about 'subject races,' citizenship, and decolonisation.

As this essay has attempted to argue, an important way to reframe the 1968 Kenyan Asian Crisis is by moving beyond the national frameworks through which it has tended to be approached. Specifically, this essay has attempted to integrate the previously disconnected historiographies through an explicitly global and long-term comparative approach. It has suggested the benefits of

[58] For "statelessness" as a twentieth-century product of the nation, see Mira Siegelberg, *Statelessness: A Modern History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020).

viewing the metropole and colony/ies, as well as the colonial and post-colonial periods, within the same analytical frame. Such a lens demonstrates that the eventual Kenyan Asian exclusion was far from inevitable and best understood through the contingent transition from hierarchical yet inclusive forms of imperial citizenship to self-determining yet exclusive ideas of the national citizen. As raised briefly at the beginning of this piece, this approach also encourages two central comparisons, which allow us to think more broadly about the problems of Mahmood Mamdani's "subject race" during the transition from empire to nation.

Firstly, surveying the national historiographies allows a comparison of the ways in which different incipient national citizenships approached the Kenyan Asians. By 1968, all of Kenya, India, and Britain had defined the Asians as outside their racialised idea of the national citizen. However, because of their varying relationships to the Asians, they had to enact this exclusion differently. India was responsible for its diaspora only in a symbolic, or historical, sense. It was relatively simple to end extra-territorial citizenship in 1955, having relied on the 'princely states loophole' up until this point. Kenya, on the other end of this diaspora, could not so simply deny citizenship. Instead, they officially allowed Asians to apply, while making it clear that these Asians did not belong in the Kenyan nation through explicitly racist rhetoric and implicitly racist legislation.

In a sense, Britain found itself in a similar position to Kenya. It came to define the nation through legislation rather than citizenship. However, the fact that Kenyan Asians were already CUKC citizens made the British task more complicated. Whilst India and Kenya were adapting to ruling over themselves, Britain had to adapt to ruling no one but itself. This problem was solved by using an emphatically imperial tactic, racially discriminating between citizens through immigration legislation, to define the nation. In fact, it was only in 1981 that Britain explicitly organised its citizenship along national lines.[59] This comparative approach, therefore, presents a

[59] Karatani, *Defining British Citizenship*, 179–189.

challenge to the common perception that the African nation-state was a European export. In terms of national citizenship, it was Britain who was struggling to catch up.

But such difficulty to define the British nation should be understood neither as a surprise, nor necessarily as a failure. Instead, it was the very ambiguity of British ideas of subjecthood and citizenship that allowed the incorporation of diverse peoples into imperial hierarchy. Combining the historical literature from the colonial and post-colonial periods allows a comparison between imperial and national forms of citizenship which highlights the varying ways in which empires and nations conceptualise difference. In colonial Kenya, the universalism of British subjecthood excused a racialised political hierarchy in which Asians existed between White settlers and African natives. While including a diverse range of people as British, not all Britons were entitled to the same political rights. This contradiction was at the heart of empire and has been termed "the rule of colonial difference" by Partha Chatterjee.[60]

The anti-colonial nation's purpose was to eradicate such contradictions. It attempted to establish political emancipation by conflating citizenship and rights—all national citizens should have equal rights. However, while desirable in the abstract, such coherence did not consider the in-between statuses of privileged minorities, such as the Kenyan Asians, that empire's contradictions had created and included. National citizenship, in striving for self-determination, necessitated a more explicit definition of the self. If more politically equal, the nation was also more exclusive, making the existence of minorities created by empire precarious. This process sees its culmination in the exclusive ideas of the Kenyan, Indian, and British citizen, and ensuing Asian effective statelessness.

Conclusion

[60] Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

In 1923, European settlers argued that their fears about Asians in Kenya would be understood in the metropole only upon the immigration of these Asians into Britain. During decolonisation, they were proved correct. The 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act made eighty thousand Kenyan Asians effectively stateless. Having imagined themselves as citizens of Kenya, Britain, and India at various points throughout the twentieth century, in 1968, the Asians found themselves excluded from all three categories. This historiographical essay has integrated the thus far disconnected literatures on the Kenyan Asian crisis to argue that this episode must be understood from long-term and global perspectives. Such an approach suggests that the coherence of national citizenship was not sufficiently equipped to address the contradictions of its imperial equivalent. Further work on the relationship between race and citizenship during decolonisation through a comparative lens may help to shed light on how empire's subject races can find a place within the nation.

Indeed, the experience of the Kenyan Asians is easily extended to subject races across the African continent. Beyond the Nubian community within Kenya, one could also draw parallels with the Asian minorities across Tanzania, Uganda, Zanzibar, and South Africa. The Arabs of Zanzibar, or the Tutsi of Rwanda and Burundi, provide similar examples. Having existed between the coloniser and the colonised, these subject races struggled in the post-colony, often entering into debates about settler and native which the nation could not solve. One could even generalise these problems globally, as the collapse of the world of diverse European empires into theoretically homogeneous nation-states created the twentieth-century problem of the "minority". In this vein, political scientist Mahmood Mamdani has recently expanded on his previous theorisation of African settlers, natives, and minorities in a global context.

Mamdani argues that nationalism did not precede colonialism; instead, the two were co-constituted. He highlights that the birth of the modern state took place amid ethnic cleansing and overseas domination. While political modernity, defined by the nation, may have taken the form of liberal tolerance in Europe, in the colonies, it was defined by conquest and domination. Mamdani is concerned with the nation's creation and victimisation of a politicised minority, which

he paints as a global affair. He begins with how the United States, which Mamdani terms the "model modern colony", perpetrated genocide against American Indians before moving to Nazi Germany's genocide against the Jews. He also explores the example of South Africa, where White settlers forced Blacks into tribal homelands known as Bantustans. Finally, Mamdani turns to Sudan, where the British segregated Arabs and Africans into separate homelands, before offering the contemporary example of Zionism's forced exile of non-Jews in Palestine.

Of particular interest is the important role of indirect imperial rule in creating the minority that would suffer within the postcolonial nation, as seen in the fate of the Kenyan Asians. The broader global context provided by Mamdani reveals that empire and nation co-created each other, with the ultimate result of a postcolonial modernity that has seen countless minorities, created by diverse empires, persecuted at the hands of nations. Mamdani's work is not just one of history, but also political theory, leading him to make normative arguments. In particular, he points to what he sees as the failure of the denazification process, characterized by the discourse of human rights, which criminalises individuals and prevents nationalist violence from becoming the problem of politics. This stands contrary to the success of post-apartheid South Africa, where actors accepted their diverse identities but refused to let these identities define their politics.

This leads Mamdani to propose his interpretation of the decolonisation of the political, which involves the creation of a 'state without a nation.'[61] Historians are sceptical of a political scientist's attempt to provide overarching frameworks. But Mamdani's attempt to push beyond the nation aligns with historian Frederick Cooper's call for historians to think imaginatively about alternative ends to empire. According to Cooper, federations provided a real possibility in the 1950s within the French empire. He argues that such political models may have enabled layered notions of citizenship that were less exclusive than the resolute coherence of national citizenship.[62]

[61] Mahmood Mamdani, *Neither Settler nor Native: The Making and Unmaking of Permanent Minorities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020).
[62] Frederick Cooper, "Postscript" in Emma Hunter ed., *Citizenship, Belonging, and Political Community in Africa: Dialogues between Past and Present* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2016): 282–293.

Anthropologist Gary Wilder is another proponent of such a vision as demonstrated in his reconstruction of the political thought of anti-colonial intellectuals Aimé Césaire and Léopold Senghor. Wilder argues that Césaire and Senghor propagated federal visions of postcolonial futures that could have escaped the exclusionary downfalls of the nation-state.[63]

Perhaps such alternative forms of political belonging would have afforded a more secure postcolonial future for Asians in Kenya. More recently, historians revised Cooper and Wilder's revisionism. Samuel Moyn, for example, demands that scholarship lamenting the lost potential of federalism also explain why the nation-state then came to be so emphatically victorious.[64] Merve Fejzula pushes this critique further by identifying a "methodological republicanism" that underpins the recent work on federalism, which erroneously presumes that federal political forms would inevitably provide a more democratic future than national ones.[65] Deciding on a form of politics or citizenship that would have more successfully accommodated the Kenyan Asians is far beyond the scope of this historiographical essay. What it has attempted to show through integrating disparate historiographies is that global and long-term perspectives can help elucidate the transition from imperial citizenship to that of various nations.

Zaki Rehman is a PhD Student in the History Faculty at the University of Oxford. He works on Islam's globalisation in the twentieth century, with a particular focus on Muslim minorities, religious freedom, and human rights.

[63] Gary Wilder, *Freedom Time: Negritude, Decolonisation, and the Future of the World* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015).
[64] Samuel Moyn, "Fantasies of Federalism," *Dissent* 62, no. 1 (2015): 145–151.
[65] Merve Fejzula, "The Cosmopolitan Historiography of Twentieth Century Federalism," *The Historical Journal* 64, no. 2 (2021): 477–500.

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Exploring the Nuremberg Rallies and the 1936 Nazi Olympics in Berlin: Formations of Spectacle and Aesthetic

Nima Mohammadi

The University of Chicago: The Law School

Abstract: *This paper explores the use of spectacle and aesthetic by the German National Socialist in the Nuremberg Rallies and 1936 Olympics. I argue these events were used to promote National Socialist ideology and control of (Goebbel's notions of) the masses through a decentralised—in decision-making, and in aesthetic consequence—reliance on cultural practices. This paper integrates insight and analysis by Fletcher Spotts, George Mosse, and Roger Griffin as it delves into the intricacies of Nazi aesthetics, arguing that the regime's emphasis on visual grandeur and classical motifs was crucial in constructing a mythic narrative of Aryan superiority and national rebirth. Leni Riefenstahl's documentaries, such as* Triumph of the Will *and* Olympia*, highlights the role of promoting unity and beauty within the broader Nazi ideological framework, again with connections to historiographical and consequentialist theories. The article also explores the historical and cultural significance of these spectacles, considering their impact on both domestic and international audiences. The goal was radicalisation, with cultural convergence reinforcing adherence to the state as both means and ends for equilibrium.*

Keywords: *aesthetic; cultural convergence; Nazism*

Introduction and Motivations

> It was intended that no German should feel himself merely to be a visitor at the [Olympic] Games but that everyone should share in the responsibility of presenting them.
>
> —Games of the XI Olympiad, Berlin, 1936 Official Report.[1]

After the collapse of the German state in the First World War and the emergence of the National Socialist Workers Party in the wake of the Weimar Republic, the late 1920s and 1930s were a period of unification and the formalisation of political ideology for both the Nazi party and the rest of Germany at large. Both the 1927–1938 Nazi Party Nuremberg Rallies and the 1936 Olympics were public spectacles, defined by John J. MacAloon as "a dynamic form, demanding movement, action, change and exchange on the part of the human actors who are on centre stage, and the spectators must be excited in turn".[2] Both events used and drew large crowds: the rallies as the dynamic form and action with crowds as spectators and participants alike; the Olympics hosting athletes in sport defined by movement and action with a more pre-existing defined clarity between participant and spectator. The rallies and the Olympics played significant roles in promoting the idea of national regeneration and projecting the image of a unified fascist Nazi state. Joseph Goebbels, as the Minister of Propaganda, played a crucial role in orchestrating these events, ensuring that every aspect aligned with Nazi ideology and propaganda goals.[3] But perhaps they were not the central mechanisms of state unification. Leni Riefenstahl's films have notably held an outsized place in the popular memory of the Nazi state. They both contributed to the broader efforts of unification and their impact can be understood within the larger context of Nazi political and social strategies.

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[1] Organisationskomitee für die XI Olympiade Berlin et al., *XI Olympiade Berlin 1936: Amtlicher Bericht* (vol. 1, Berlin: W. Limpert, 1937), 365.
[2] John J. MacAloon, *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsals toward a Theory of Cultural Performance* (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1984).
[3] David Welch, *The Third Reich: Politics and Propaganda* (2nd edn. London: Routledge, 2002).

Given the evolution of the Nuremberg Rallies and the trajectory of the Olympics being staged in Berlin in 1936,[4] the Nazis coopted cultural practices to create an unbreakable Nazi connection to an athletic competition thousands of years old, and recently recreated what were already culturally and provincially German festivals stemming from the nineteenth century.[5] Historians have noted the effect of these two spectacles to create a united "Nazi past, present, and future".[6] This effect was uniquely chronicled domestically and externally for both events, as foreigners were allowed into both events. What styles were used in the "presentation" of these events? Did the Nazis use a specific form to achieve a desired function, and from where did it originate? Who were the Nazis making these decisions? Was it Hitler himself or his subordinates? Were they entirely a new phenomenon of the Nazis perpetuated by repression and oppression as tactics, as Sabine Hake has argued,[7] or a different phenomenon altogether? This article examines the extent to which the Olympics and the Nuremberg Rallies demonstrate a coherent Nazi racial aesthetic. The central question debated is whether these events were products of a centralised artistic vision closely controlled by Hitler, Speer, and Goebbels, or if they were decentralised and derivative of other art movements.

How was this formalised during the Nazi regime, and can we pinpoint a locus or a source? Drawing on the Nazis' own internal reports, Frederic Spotts reveals that there was no coherent policy towards the arts or a large-scale organisational effort to create the aesthetic. It was seemingly unplanned. The Nazi report reads, "Despite the large number of cultural organisations there is no coherent planning. [Agencies] all individually seeking to promote a National Socialist cultural policy but have never succeeded in organising these forces into a coherent, mutually supporting

[4] Hitler originally did not want to host a symbol of peace and international unity and believed they stemmed from Jewry. See David Clay Large, *Nazi Games: The Olympics of 1936* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 2007), 59.
[5] Kathy Carol Reinert, "Music and the Nazi Party Congresses: Its Role in Spectacle, Festival and Ritual," MA thesis, University of Alberta, 1997, 47.
[6] See, for example: Joshua Hagen and Robert Ostergren, "Spectacle, Architecture and Place at the Nuremberg Party Rallies: Projecting a Nazi Vision of Past, Present and Future," *Cultural Geographies* 13, no. 2 (2006): 157; Christopher Hilton, *Hitler's Olympics: The 1936 Berlin Olympic Games* (Cheltenham, UK: The History Press, 2011), 168.
[7] Sabine Hake, *German National Cinema* (London: Routledge, 2013), 65.

and forward-looking policy in the cultural sphere".[8] Ultimately, leadership is part of the ideological reality; Susan Sontag agreed that through his leadership, Hitler emerged as a locus himself of the aesthetic.[9] George Mosse's work also provides a critical understanding of how these aesthetics were inherently tied to the notion of an idealised Aryan beauty and societal unity. Mosse argues that the Nazi regime's emphasis on physical perfection, inspired by classical Greek ideals, was not merely for artistic purposes but served as a visual representation of their ideological goals.[10] This intertwining of beauty and power in the Nazi aesthetic was crucial in promoting the fascist ideology of racial superiority.

It seems, then, that the formalisation of the aesthetic was also not centrally planned; rather, it was a result of the decentralised efforts by both Hitler and his subordinates. Here, I use "decentralised" in the substantive consequence of the aesthetic, the delegation of decisions by Hitler to decision-makers notwithstanding. Analysis of both the rallies and the Olympics reveals the impetus for many of the artistic decisions as not localised. However, in light of these many sources, the creation of the aesthetic seems inevitable. Further, the artistic depictions of the spectacle of the rallies and of the Olympics are militarised through sport. In recent research, sport has been excluded from understanding the spectacle of the Nuremberg Rallies,[11] but their historical connection to the Olympics, both before and after the event, cannot be denied.

Finally, the decentralised formation and existence of the Nazi aesthetic and cultural policy (including the Olympics here) explain the inconsistencies shared by accounts of these events in light of their racialised nature: namely, the relationship between both and their marginalisation of the Jews of Europe. The decentralised aesthetic excuses other actions taken by the Nazi regime as they co-opted prior Germanic and international cultural practices for their own violently racialised political efforts.

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[8] Frederic Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics* (New York: The Overlook Press, 2002), 77.
[9] See, for example: Susan Sontag, "Fascinating Fascism," *The New York Review of Books* 6, no. 2 (1975): 12.
[10] George L. Mosse, "Fascist Aesthetics and Society: Some Considerations," *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 31, no. 2 (1996): 245–252.
[11] Reinert, "Music and the Nazi Party Congresses," 7.

Historical Background of the Rallies

Spotts' formalisation of the Nazi aesthetic[12] notes Nazism and Hitler alike as exceptionally "unoriginal", from Hitler's own artistic endeavours as a painter to Nazi exhibition and architectural styles.[13] Spotts' formalisation is one of many, including those of Sontag, Griffin, Mosse, and others. Roger Griffin's concept of palingenetic ultranationalism offers a deeper understanding of the ideological underpinnings of the Nazi spectacles. According to Griffin, the Nazi regime's use of aesthetics was aimed at creating a mythic narrative of national rebirth and cultural rejuvenation. This is evident in the 1936 Berlin Olympics, where the blending of Germanic and Greco-Roman artistic forms symbolised a return to a glorified past and a new dawn for the Aryan race.[14] Ultimately, both events relied heavily on historical co-optation as they were packages and marketed as belonging to the Nazi party.

For Spotts, Hitler placed art at the centre of the state, what he would ultimately think of as his; he intertwined his obsession with aesthetics with his political ambitions. His dedication to art, despite its often conventional and unoriginal nature, was as integral to his regime as his pursuit of power.[15] Even through the war, Hitler remained focused on his artistic projects, treating them as the true purpose of his leadership. As Morton Levitt notes of Spotts' argument,

> [f]rom the moment that he achieved political power, Hitler laboured to place art as he understood it at the very centre of his state. His obsession with art was as all-encompassing as his anti-Semitism; not surprisingly, the two obsessions were often linked, in principle as in practice….He wanted art to provide escape from pain, not confrontation with it.[16]

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[12] On the analysis of the Nazism and Fascist phenomenon and aesthetic together, see, for example: Norman Davies, *Europe: A History* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1998); Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (London: Vintage, 2000); Zeev Sternhell, *Neither Left Nor Right: Fascist Ideology in France* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); Robert Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (London: Vintage, 2005); and Jonathan Allen, "The Dark Arts of Politics: Aesthetics and Engineering in Nazism and Fascism," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 41, no. 1 (2007): 113.

[13] Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics*, 125–26, 217.

[14] Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Routledge, 1993).

[15] See, for example: Morton P. Levitt, "Review of Frederick Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics*," *Journal of Modern Literature* 26, no. 3/4 (2003): 176–178.

[16] Ibid.

Spotts' analysis brings forward the profound and complex role of aesthetics[17] in understanding cultural symbolism and the National Socialist state.

The decision to host revamped party rallies in Nuremberg starting from 1927 was originally borne out of necessity and pragmatism. Its basis is crucial in understanding the Nuremberg Rallies, which began in 1927 as a pragmatic decision but evolved into a key spectacle of Nazi ideology. That is not to say it had a historical significance that could match and be aligned with the Nazi party goals. Hitler and the NSDAP had started their party rallies in Munich, where the party had formed, but after the first successful rally in Munich in 1923, a two-day event for Northern Germans was designed to be held in Nuremberg from that autumn. The festival was one that connected political history with military history, as it focused on the Battle of Sedan in 1870 against the French during the Franco-Prussian War and the Battle of Tannenberg against the Russians in 1914 during the First World War.[18] However, as the Beer Putsch—the attempt in Munich to overthrow the government—failed, Hitler was jailed and banned from speaking in Bavaria. The presence of sport, culture, and a militarised aesthetic were spotted early. In the absence of the party meetings, the SA—which would send members—would continue to meet to stage sports clubs (mainly sharpshooting), singing clubs, and rifle clubs.[19] While financial difficulties kept the party from meeting again for the next few years, the party met again in Weimar in 1926, and the ban was lifted and the party returned immediately back to Nuremberg. The choice of returning reveals Hitler's obsession with Nuremberg and its apparently untarnished past. Nuremberg events were becoming historically politicised.[20]

[17] See, for example: Ulrich Schmid, "Style Versus Ideology: Towards a Conceptualisation of Fascist Aesthetics," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 6, no. 1 (2005): 127–140.
[18] Andrew Rawson, *Showcasing the Third Reich: The Nuremberg Rallies* (Cheltenham, UK: The History Press, 2012), 8–10.
[19] Ibid.
[20] See, for example: Hagen and Ostergren, "Spectacle, Architecture and Place at the Nuremberg Party Rallies," 175.

Nuremberg was considered neutral in terms of provincial ethnicity more so than Munich; it was neither too Bavarian nor too Prussian.[21] Politically, the city was actually considered a "red" stronghold of the Social Democrats.[22] The town of Nuremberg was not originally the Nazi stronghold that it became later, strong enough so that in the 1930s its Nazi mayor would call it "the most German of German cities".[23] But Hitler liked the story the city could tell in connecting his idea of the state to the German past. Nuremberg was a medieval city and one of the best preserved in Germany. Hitler recognised this publicly during his speeches and did much to connect the city to his idea of the Reichstadt, which he characterised as originating in medieval Germany with the First Reich (otherwise known as the Holy Roman empire).[24]

During and after the first rally, pictures of Nuremberg's old town and medieval architecture were distributed *en masse* by the Nazis in media (but not the Nazi party itself),[25] already beginning the modes of repetition crucial to Susan Sontag's development of the fascist aesthetic.[26] She points out that fascist art is not merely about brutality and terror but also about a romanticised ideal that emphasises life as art, the cult of beauty, and a sense of community and ecstatic feelings that dissolve individual alienation.[27] Rather than following Spotts' organisational consequentialist theory, Sontag focuses on and critiques the eroticisation and theatricality of fascist spectacle. The National Socialist presence in form itself was not solidified as marketable. As Figure 1 shows, the party rallies were much more disorganised in the beginning, which is in stark contrast to the total precision and control that Spotts paints in Hitler's decision-making for the rallies. He apparently "fastidiously" designed all the choreography and movements of people for the rally but did not achieve his intended role of repeated symmetry and unified movement until later.[28] There was no

[21] Rawson, *Showcasing the Third Reich*, 11.
[22] Hagen and Ostergren, "Spectacle, Architecture and Place at the Nuremberg Party Rallies," 159.
[23] Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics*, 62.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Reinert, "Music and the Nazi Party Congresses," 57.
[26] See, for example: Sontag, "Fascinating Fascism," 2.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics*, 62.

symmetry in the rally of people or movements; rather, it was an organic assembly of people from all socio-economic states coupled with members of the young SA. I am suggesting here that earlier rallies were less organised than those that came later. The site also did not have large structures until later massive building projects by Speer.[29] Figure 2 shows the progression and development of the rallies; in 1933 there was much more organisational capacity of the spectator and of the participant, using a purely military form. Battalions were organised and marched across the grounds in accordance with this form. Wooden structures were built, which helped organise but did not give the semblance of later permanence in the rallies.

The content of the rallies gave the biggest basis for the co-optation practices by the Nazis. These rallies drew largely from the German festivals of the nineteenth century, which were organised around *Volk*.[30] The schedules of a typical festival of the time, the Heidelberg folk festival, and the Nuremberg rally schedule of the 1936 Party congress highlight the similarities in cultural programming of dance and music, as well as the aesthetics of fire and night/darkness. Both events featured torch-light processions, which are an important connection to the Olympics, because the practice of a torch relay from Greece to the site of the games began with the Nazi regime. The Greek Olympics stood for unity, athletic excellence, and global collaboration, and notably seen here. But the symbolic meaning was twisted. One exemplified worldwide unity and athletic achievement, while the other exploits the torch's symbolism to glorify nationalism and sway the emotion of the public: the mechanism in reverse. The Nazi torch processions sought to evoke, rather than impart reverence, enveloping the occasion in an aura of passion and loyalty. Photographs from the processions demonstrate the expansion on the relationship between light and dark,[31] because there is a presence of both distinct light on the street as well as the cloudy illumination of lights around the scene that only focus on the Nazi banners and swastikas. This

[29] Rawson, *Showcasing the Third Reich*, 16.
[30] *Volk* is defined by Langensheidt's German–English dictionary as "people, nation"; Langenscheidt, *German–English Dictionary* (2nd edn., London: Simon and Schuster, 2009), 312.
[31] Rawson, *Showcasing the Third Reich*, 16.

Figure 1: Nuremberg Rally in 1929, from Wikimedia Commons. This image is part of the public domain.

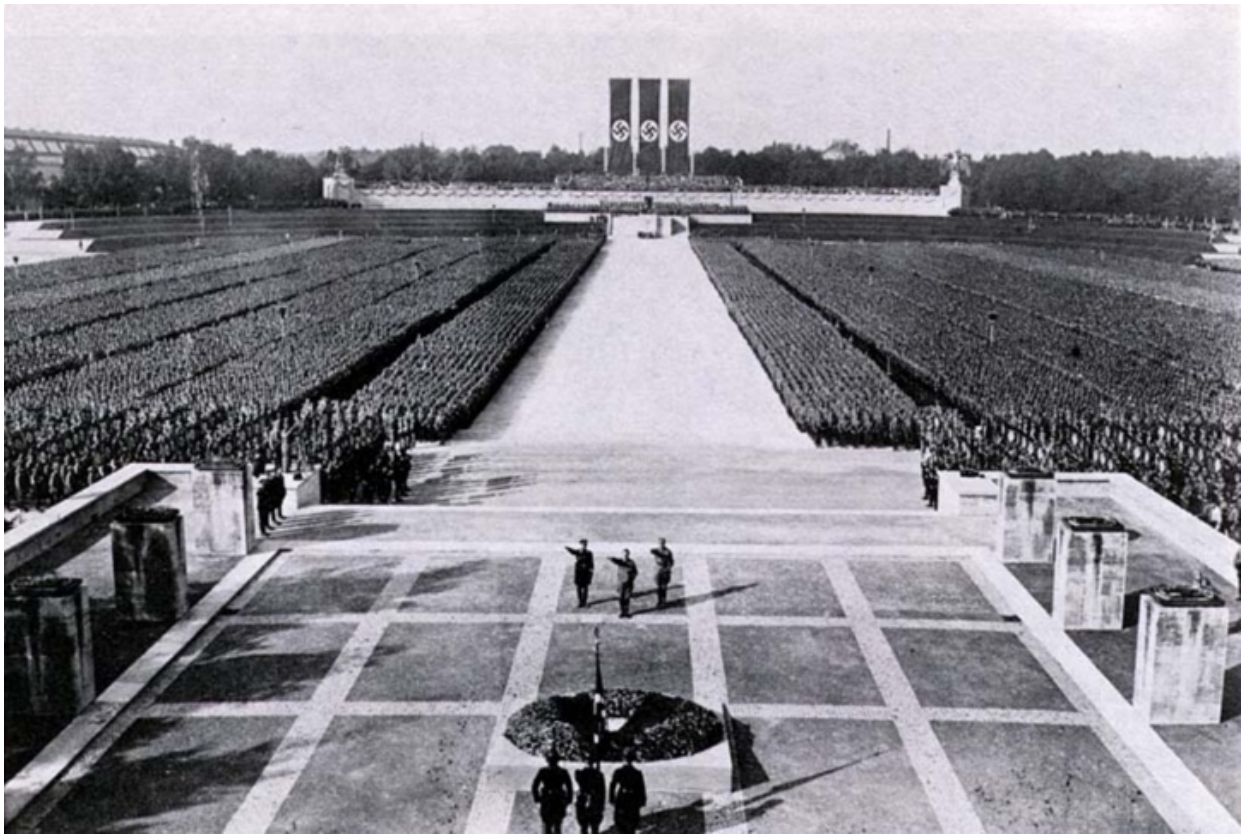

Figure 2: Nuremberg Rally in 1933, from Wikimedia Commons. This image is part of the public domain.

works to create a clear but distorted reality of events that are "Nazi-fied", whereas the cultural festivals of the century past were not localising[32] in any political sense, rather celebrating an overall Germanic culture. As a final example here, while fireworks were apparent in these folk festivals, as the Itinerary form the Heidelberg Folk Festival illustrates,[33] the National Socialist version of fireworks created literal illuminations of Swastikas in the nighttime sky. Localisation happens again, as the light and focus disappear as distance from Nuremberg increases.[34]

Diversity of form increased in the rallies as Hitler eyed the location as a place for mass building and architectural projects. Most notably, the Greco-Roman form, which Hitler idolised, developed in the building of such structures as the Zeppelin Field (seen in back of Figure 2). There is apparent discord in the impetus behind these Greco-Roman styles. Speer claimed that he came

[32] By "localising", I mean to describe an aesthetic phenomenon at a lower level of granularity from unified Deutschland.
[33] Reinert, "Music and the Nazi Party Congresses," 57.
[34] Ibid.

up with the design, but Hitler claimed to have brought the influence, as the naming of the field to Mars field (named for the Roman god of war) was attributed to him.[35]

The source of the mixing between Greco-Roman and Germanic artistic forms also remains unclear up to the climax of the rallies. The so-called Cathedral of Lights (Figure 4), where huge searchlights were set up behind the Zeppelin stage to create beams of light reaching for the heavens is another such example. Speer again claimed the idea for this, with an unknown impetus, but it is also attributed to Hitler. Spotts posits that this idea originated with the Wagnerian opera *Tristan und Isolde* staged at Bayreuth that Hitler had attended as a teenager.[36] Hitler was apparently taken aback by the innovative lighting designs that created an atmosphere of haze that would eventually be focused on light.

The historical record also points to Speer furthering his goals to filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl when understanding how the similar "Cathedral" effect occurred in the closing ceremony of the 1936 games (see Figure 3), as captured by the films *Olympia I and II*. Historians argue over where these effects were drawn from and by whom they originated, but they were always confirmed by Hitler, pointing again to the decentralised cultural aesthetic that was still affirmed by one leader among the previously cited "institutional anarchy" by Spotts. Earlier works by Ernst Jünger like *The Total Mobilization (Die totale Mobilmachung)* and *The Worker (Der Arbeiter)* reveal part of the fascist aesthetic that Walter Benjamin first pointed out—a totally militarised and mobilised activist society.[37] Other important scholars of the Nazi aesthetic, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno in Dialectic of Enlightenment, argued that Nazism was "a form of domination nascent since the Homeric period in Western conceptions of reason as a form of mastery over nature".[38]

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[35] Rawson, *Showcasing the Third Reich*, 20.
[36] Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics*, 58.
[37] Walter Benjamin, "Theories of German Fascism: On the Collection of Essays War and Warrior, edited by Ernst Jünger," *New German Critique* 17 (1979) 103–104, cited in Bogdan Costea and Kostas Amiridis, "Ernst Jünger, Total Mobilisation and the Work of War," *Organization* 24, no. 4 (2017): 477.
[38] Allen, "The Dark Arts of Politics," 114.

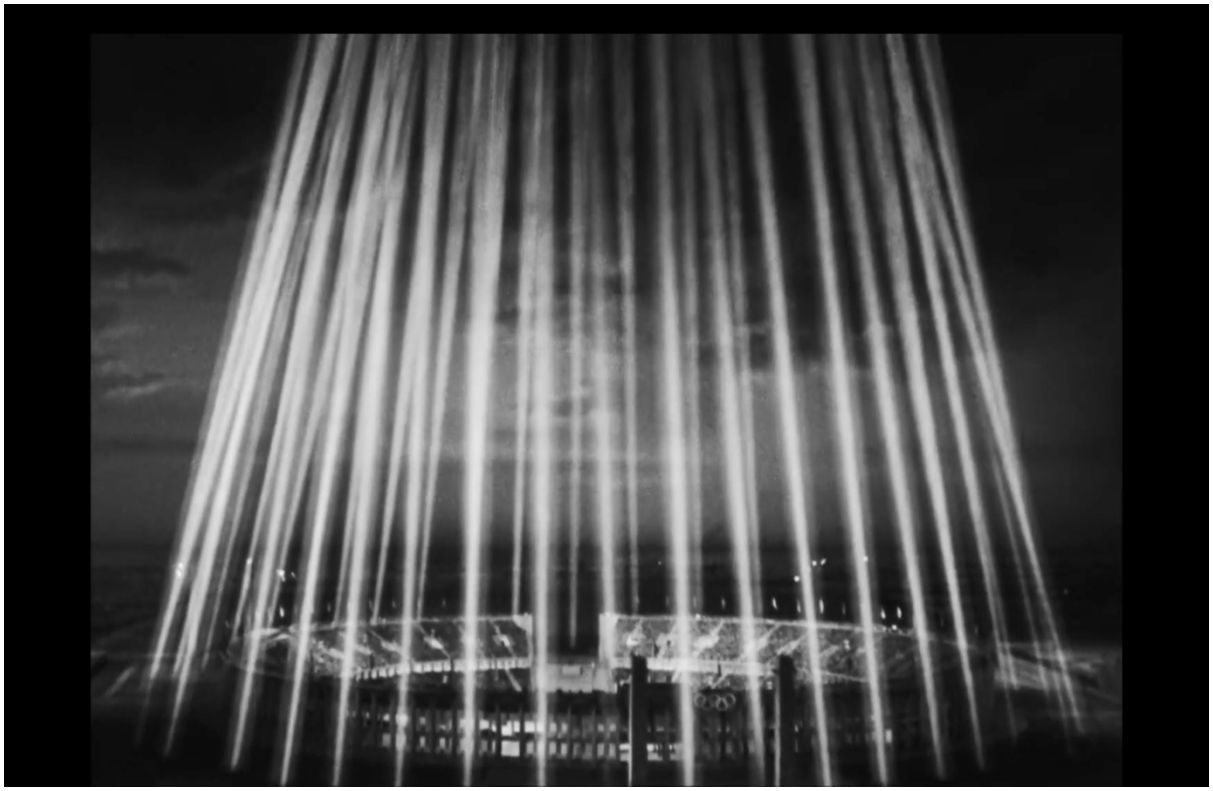

Figure 3: Closing Ceremony of the Olympic Games, taken from Riefenstahl's Olympia Part 2. This work is in the public domain in the United States of America.

Regardless, the localising effect occurs again with the Cathedral of Lights exhibit and closing ceremony, the latter to a much larger effect. With regards to the rally light show, the haze of the lights was reportedly seen as far away as Frankfurt.[39] The localisation effect occurs here again (see Figure 4), where the lights became more defined and distinct as beams the closer one was to Nuremberg and both the aggregation of Nazi party members and the dissemination that would take place to the larger party in the wake of these events each year. By this time the evolution of the spectacle in form was also complete, with no asymmetrical groupings of people and mass organisation, reflected by the linear and horizontal spaces between people attending the rally. The effect of the lighting in the Olympics multiplied both to foreign spectators at the games and those

[39] Reinert, "Music and the Nazi Party Congresses," 82.

who saw the Riefenstahl *Olympia* films later, localised Germany as a new but always existing centre of the world, just as Nuremberg was planned to be seen as in Germany.[40]

Figure 4: Cathedral of Light, from Wikimedia/Bundesarchiv. This image is part of the public domain.

Harmonisation of Germanic and Greco-Roman influences for the 1936 Olympics and an opportunity for further racialisation

Unlike the resurgence of a Germanic celebratory festival through the Nuremberg rallies, the initial interest in the revival of the official Olympic games was an entirely French affair. However, the innate nature of how host cities were picked, from early on until today starts to explain the convergence. The modern-day Olympics were started by the Baron de Coubertin of France, who was an important figure in the reformation of public education in the country as well.[41] Co-optation, in a sense, is an integral part of the Olympics, as the selection committee in Lausanne,

[40] William Gerard Durick, "To the Berlin Games: The Olympic Movement in Germany from 1896–1936," MS thesis, North Texas State University, 1984, 79.
[41] Hilton, *Hitler's Olympics*, 12.

Switzerland chose countries to host that were recognised nationally. Germany was chosen during the Weimar regime (1931)[42] as an indication of the political and economic re-emergence of the country given the depression and the political objectives harmful to Germany after the Treaty of Versailles.[43]

Harmless but Racialised. These overtones were apparent early on in the development of the Nazi regime. The same harmless nature observed by foreign attendees to the games was the same nature intended as the English version of *Mein Kampf* was published, with proceeds from the text going to the British Red Cross.[44] In fact, the process that the International Olympic Committee (hereafter "IOC") outlined for Hitler did nothing but *re-emphasize* his nationalistic and racialised message. After the Nazi party took initial steps to not allow Jews to participate in the games, the IOC rebuked him publicly. In response, the Nazis created more mechanisms that seemed to be just the parallel of the nationalistic *Kulturbund*[45] regimes that they had created to exclude Jews from the cultural sphere. As long as German Jews were not being excluded directly from the games, rather excluded from joining the Olympic groups and societies to form the German national Olympic teams, they were successfully excluded, on a case-by-case basis; some were included at the danger of gunpoint for their families.[46] Goebbels played a significant role here: his propaganda strategies aimed to portray the event as a celebration of Aryan superiority and Nazi ideals while implementing connections to Greco-Roman visual aesthetics.[47] His coordination of media and cultural presentations was crucial in shaping both domestic and international perceptions of the Games.

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[42] Ibid, 12.
[43] The Weimar Republic, formed after the First World War, was the birthplace of Bauhaus design and existentialist ideas akin to Martin Heidegger's, producing literary works like Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain* and the groundbreaking *Threepenny Opera* by Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill. This regime also experienced the hyperinflations of the Reichsmark and stood as the republic before the rise of Nazism, enduring numerous violent efforts to dismantle its fledgling democratic systems. See, for example: Michael Brenner, "Review of Eric D. Weitz, *Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy*," *German Politics & Society* 27, no. 1 (2009): 97.
[44] Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics*, 4.
[45] Michael H. Kater, *Different Drummers: Jazz in the Culture of Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 5.
[46] Hilton, *Hitler's Olympics*, 13–19.
[47] See, for example: Large, *Nazi Games*.

Attacking the international Jewry was fine on paper. This is epitomised by the example of one of the Olympic training facilities, which read "Jews In", with the "In" hastily replaced with "Out". Hilton notes that Hitler was basically "forced to compromise" on the question of Jewish athletic acceptance.[48] Multiple accounts further this doublethink between a sense of danger from the state and complete feelings of safety.

Esther Myers, a University of Kansas student attending the games, wrote,

> They wanted to let you know they were welcoming you. They were so gracious to us. We got the impression they wanted to do away with the Jewish people and black people.—no, it was all so wonderful, they were the supreme people and they had accomplished so much.[49]

She echoed this sentiment as noted later in the text when she said, "They wanted to let you know they were welcoming you. They were so gracious to us, oh my, yes. There were guns constantly but we never felt threatened".[50] Participants noted how the spaces and crowds did so much to create the feelings and sentiments like those shared by Myers. This was not a completely Germanic aesthetic presented during the games. Hellenic and Roman cultures had become one with the distinctly German notions of mysticism manifested in lighting and staging. These were purportedly advanced by Carl Diem, then head of the German Olympic Committee and another mouthpiece of action for Hitler.[51] He also apparently came up with the idea to have a relay from the original site of the games in Olympia, Greece, to the site of the games in Berlin. Figure 5 shows the Olympic torch runner, dressed in a Greco-Roman garb.

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[48] Ibid, 16.
[49] Esther Myers, cited in Hilton, *Hitler's Olympics*, 87.
[50] Ibid, 107–108.
[51] Michael Mackenzie, "From Athens to Berlin: The 1936 Olympics and Leni Riefenstahl's Olympia," *Critical Inquiry* 29, no. 2 (2003): 317.

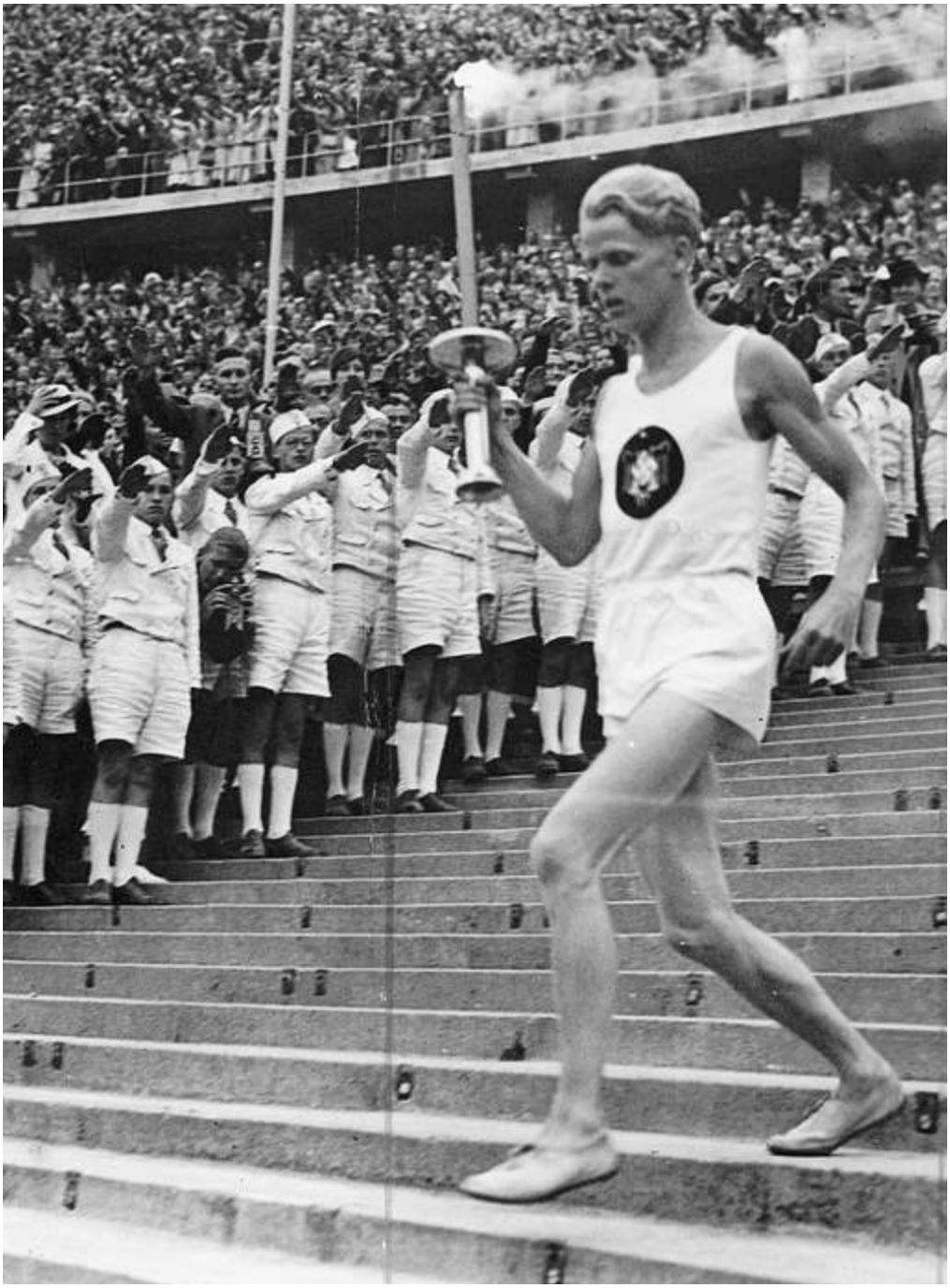

Figure 5: Picture of Torch Relay, Wikimedia Commons. This image is from the public domain.

The architecture for the games distinctly "more resembled the Roman rather than the classical Greek architecture".[52] Werner March, who designed many of the stadiums and facilities

[52] Stephany Tzanoudaki, "The Transition of the Olympic City from Visual Representations of Coubertin's Modern Ideal to City Representations as Fashionable Images," PhD thesis, Edinburgh College of Art, 2011, 157.

for the Olympiad, stuck to the open amphitheatre style seen in many Greek facades, such as the one in Delphi. However, in typical Nazi duplication, he sized it up for Hitler.

It is again difficult to place the locus of the only seemingly "Nazi" part about the architectural decisions to scale up pre-existing models, as Hitler loved to do with his opera houses, train stations, party buildings, and art museums. As Spotts notes, German architect, interior designer, and interior decorator, Gerdy Troost, liked to share the anecdote that if her husband was approached by the Fuhrer with plans for 100 people, Troost would suggest a better architectural design for 98 people and Hitler would accept. However, if Hitler had approached Speer with the same constraints, Speer would have convinced the Fuhrer to double the number of people for the venue, and quite successfully.[53] Sontag's analysis of the transformation into the political experience and aesthetic would thus follow. Given the multiple points of people and access for Hitler to enlarge forms, this decentralised planning scheme again became inevitable after Troost's death, again echoing Sontag's point regarding decentralisation functionalism in her 1975 paper.

Riefenstahl and Depictions of Nuremberg and Berlin, 1936: Germanic Conservatism and Spirit

Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* and *Olympia* were both documents of spectacle and spectacles themselves: they noted the events of the Nuremberg party rallies as well as the 1936 Olympiad. They both seem to follow Hitler's dogma of form fitting function; each fit their purpose of both dramatising and historically contextualising the events as part of the repeating theme evident in this paper of Nazi "past, present, and future".

[53] Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics*, 348.

From a cursory glance, both films use the contrasts between light and dark for intended effect. *Triumph of the Will* emphasises the immediate historical intensity of the aftermath of the First World War. Figure 6 is a still cut from the film. It directly shows scenes reminiscent of the ruins of Germany in the wake of the First World War. While there is not as much mechanisation and repetition of act, as evident in the later films, Riefenstahl chose greyscale for many of the scenes rather than depicting scenes with sharp contrasts. Later in the film, contrast is shown in a transitory state, such as the scene depicting one of Hitler's favourite symbols, the eagle.[54] There is no permanence, rather a largescale shift from light to dark on the same image.

Figure 6: Introduction to Triumph of the Will, War Reminiscence Scene. This work is in the public domain in the United States of America.

[54] Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics*, 55.

In contrast, the *Olympia* films succeed in creating a paradox of events that are both independent of the German mystical *Kultur*[55] and succeed in connecting Germany and/or notions of White Aryan superiority at the same time. From the very beginning, with the runestone of "Olympia" etched in dark on a surrounding *lighter* stone, the chiaroscuro appears (Figure 7). Overall, however, there is more light than dark in the scene. The contrasts are not changing as they do in *Triumph of the Will*, merely more information appears in the image that connects both Nazi Germany and Leni Riefenstahl to the spectacle.[56] The Nazi habit of scaling up to make a larger image or idea within an existing perspective is evident through the shots of the ruins of ancient Greece, which are zoomed in on the image projected to the viewer. In the historical context, where films were seen in theatres and communally, the desired effect of a unified German audience watching the film certainly heightened the effect.

Figure 7: 0'11" from Olympia: Festival of Nations. This work is in the public domain in the United States of America.

[55] Mackenzie, "From Athens to Berlin," 317.
[56] Stella Anne Morris, "Between Motion and Stasis: Leni Riefenstahl's Olympia and Schönheit Im Olympischen Kampf," BA (Hons.) thesis, University of Otago, 2012, 33.

Finally, one of the defining characteristics of the *Olympia I and II* films were their usage of novel film techniques to push certain dramatic narratives as they manipulated moving images.[57] Specifically, for each of the Olympic events, whether they were swimming, running, pole-vaulting, discus, or jumping, Riefenstahl slowed down their physical motions after the first time they were shot in real time. The physical act of each sport is repeated in this slowed regime, heightening the focus on the motion of the physical acts. Riefenstahl herself noted she was depicting "beauty" and her background in dance shines through in several of these scenes, as well as the introduction to the festival of beauty with naked women rising from darkness ("Poise").[58] This is another example of the distorted reality. Just as the women are rising, so too is the German state rising again: a palingenesis, as noted by Griffin.[59] This cultural rebirth fits the fascist ideal of continuous regeneration in the face of a large singular leader in state and the melded political and cultural goals.

Cultural convergence appears prominently here, as noted by Mackenzie. In defining the German and non-Germanic cultural notions of the time, he creates the historical background to which the Nazis latched Greco-Roman style and solidified the connection between antiquity and Germany. He notes of *Kultur*: "a mystical inwardness, healthy, natural, creative, fed by tradition, and incompatible with Western democracy". He contrasts this with *Zivilization*: an "opposition to Kultur, rooted in the French enlightenment and Anglo-American pragmatism". It is worth noting that in the end process for Nazi co-optation of the Greco-Roman style for its aesthetic, the notions of citizenry democracy, which started in Athens, Greece, disappears completely, both in politic and aesthetic. As the films show, there is no difference or variety, only unity in the face of a body of culture-politic.

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[57] Morris, "Between Motion and Stasis."
[58] Katerina Zisimopoulou and Alexis Fragkiadakis, "Modes of Repetition, Olympia II by Leni Riefenstahl: Riefenstahl's Athletes and the Image of Propaganda Space," *International Journal of the Image* 1, no. 1 (2011): 169–193.
[59] David D. Roberts, "Fascism, Marxism, and the Question of Modern Revolution," *European Journal of Political Theory* 9, no. 2 (2010): 173.

Mackenzie notes that elements of expressive dance were the antithesis of modern sports. How then was Reifenstahl able to merge the two? While the historical record does not give her the agency of decision-making, it does identify the last point in time when the two were indeed separated. Documents of the German National Olympic Committee ran by Diem show the emergence of an art exhibit at the Deutsches Museum that planned to connect Hellenic and "racialised" Nazi ideologies, entitled "Sport der Hellenen". Its opening coincided with the beginning of the games; documents reflect deliberate attempts to *separate* athletic forms and dance, as reflected by the work of a Jewish archaeologist Alfred Schiff. His curation of the exhibit was forced, with Diem paying him off the record as a result of the already instated Nuremberg laws and laws banning Jews from entering or working in any kind of civil service.[60]

MacAloon initially analysed the Nazi spectacle in context of the Nuremberg and this paradigm was furthered in differentiation by Reinert. Specifically, Reinert creates two different types of spectacle, the living and the performance. Living spectacle refers to the broad, overall spectacle created by a large-scale event in a non-choreographed setting, where spontaneity on the part of actors and audience is present. Performance spectacle, however, "describes a large-scale performance in which every detail is choreographed and planned in advance".[61]

Using this difference in understanding the Olympics rather than the rallies through the Riefenstahl films, the living and performance spectacle are combined, at the expense of spontaneity. While the athletes' performances and the results, for example, are due to spontaneous actions, Riefenstahl's slowing down of their motions that contributed most to their differences (among athletes) removes their decisions and creates the semblance of choreography in sport in the creation of the particular aesthetic. Sontag would again identify it as a fascist one.

Conclusion: Transitory Permanence in Nuremberg and the Olympics

[60] Mackenzie, "From Athens to Berlin," 323.
[61] Reinert, "Music and the Nazi Party Congresses," 10.

The Nazi party circulated the message of a continuously changing German state, one that would be constantly working to match the ideals it purported to follow, from the Greco-Roman aesthetic of style, to the cultural facets of Germanic peoples from the Middle Ages to the post-Enlightenment era. The interplay between the Olympics and the Nuremberg rallies embodies this exchange. The structure and design of many of the structures needed to create aesthetic elements, such as the giant gas rooms necessary to stage the large flames were repeatedly designed for the Olympics after the Nuremberg rallies.[62]

Further, several of the Greco-Roman statues created for the Berlin Olympics were moved to the Nuremberg party and rally grounds after the Olympics were held. While this is attributed partially to Hitler's affixation to Hellenic statues (after Myron's discus thrower, which incidentally was featured in the *Sport Der Hellenen* exhibit,[63] this move represents a larger policy shift for Hitler. He intended Nuremberg to be the future site of a militarised Olympics following a German rather than an Anglo-American sport paradigm. He foresaw military war games held there with participants from around Europe.

This is the transitory permanence of the fascist ideology and aesthetic. By connecting forms and styles that were scaled up time and time again, and maintaining a commitment, whether actualised or just rhetoric that this was part of a realisation of a hyper-racialised German state, political and military objectives that seemed to be a transition from one era to the next were in fact the intended status quo. Both the art forms and styles in marketing, advertising, and design of the Nuremberg Rallies and Olympics show the exchanges of art and public policies that reflected these equilibria. As Spotts notes in his preface, "culture was not only the end", also the intended and continually changing means of advancing fascist policy and aesthetic.

[62] Rawson, *Showcasing the Third Reich*, 74. Hilton, *Hitler's Olympics*, 48.
[63] Mackenzie, "From Athens to Berlin," 333.

Nima Mohammadi is a third-year law student at the University of Chicago Law School. He is a graduate of Mannes Conservatory Prep in viola performance and received his undergraduate degrees in Public Policy and American History at Duke University. His research interests include musicology, legal history, cultural aesthetics, and constitutional law.

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Jared Davidson, *Blood & Dirt: Prison Labour and the Making of New Zealand*

Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2023; Hardback; 303 pages; ISBN 9781991033406; RRP NZD $49.99

Blood & Dirt excavates the roots of power relations in Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa—the Pacific, providing grist to the mill for Marxist historians of settler-colonialism. The title links to the quote by Karl Marx in *Capital* (1867): "capital comes dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt". What Davidson does with this is give insight to whose blood, and what dirt. For this is a history from below that connects labour history to environmental history. The author balances the human, subjective experience, with the collective, systematic and more-than-human to present the making of New Zealand through the prism of prison labour. For prisons, as the author argues, need to be viewed "as a set of social relations that helped shape New Zealand's human and extra-human environment" (16). This book demonstrates that although New Zealand was forbidden from becoming a penal settlement with transported convicts like the neighbouring Australian colonies, diverse systems of punishment were constructed to provide free labour for resource extraction, to "open up" (and later enclose) Indigenous land and to make a profit.

The book begins with the first convicts and prison at Hohi mission in 1814 and spans to the prison farms amidst the grassland revolution of the 1920s and 1970s to bring readers to the present. The seven chapters are framed around core themes and titled: Improvement, Heavy Metal, Industry, War, Plantation, Empire, and Prison Land. The first chapter demonstrates how capital sought to counter idleness. In chapter two the author illustrates that the imprisonment of flows of workers from the maritime industry met a need for unfree labour. Chapter three argues that prisons were sites of class struggle, with Davidson dismantling the line that has been drawn between free and unfree workers. Chapter four demonstrates that prisons were instrumental in combating Māori resistance to occupation. Chapter five focuses on prison forestry, the colony's need for timber and

the agency of the environment. Chapter six refers to New Zealand's annexation of Pacific Islands and the mining of phosphate for fertiliser by incarcerated Islanders and Chinese indentured labourers. The impact of this labour is illuminated in chapter seven on the grassland revolution: the dispossession of Māori land fuelled by phosphate fertiliser and the making of the pastoral economy. This primary industry, again, was created through the unfree labour of prisoners.

Following his previous works on marginalised histories, *The History of a Riot* (2021), *Dead Letters* (2019) and *Sewing Freedom* (2013), Davidson is transparent in his motivation to take a political stance and challenge norms through his work. He does this in three ways. Davidson's approach is decolonial, moving the centre away from English to foreground Māori language, history, and culture. Secondly, he takes up the methodological challenge of writing a history from below, piecing together archival records to reveal aspects of voice and agency. Lastly, Davidson positions prison labour as environmental history using the concept "workscapes", a term from historian Thomas G. Andrews. Workscapes are used to describe places where transformation happens in "messy and ever-changing" ways that melt boundaries between the human and more-than-human environment. While Davidson brings the optics of punishment back into the fore, these three approaches illuminate broader silences and blind spots in language, history, society, and the landscape.

This book is for scholars interested in free and unfree labour, crime and punishment, settler-colonialism, history from below and environmental history. Davidson's work adds to historian Kristyn Harman's *Aboriginal Convicts* (2012) and *Cleansing the Colony* (2017), which document the transportation of convicts from New Zealand to the Australian penal colony Van Diemen's Land from 1843 to 1853 and the interconnectedness of imperialism and colonialism. Davidson has however shown that the labour of New Zealand's own prisoners fundamentally shaped the country—challenging national histories of New Zealand exceptionalism. *Blood & Dirt* also links to Australian scholars Hamish Maxwell-Stewart and Michael Quinlan's recent book *Unfree Workers* (2022), which exposes how the idea of "convictism" justified the exploitation of

prisoners and contributed to the silencing of convict workers as they were swept to the margins in official histories. Similarly, Davidson presents prisoners with agency—but he intervenes in the field of convict history by folding in the more-than-human as well.

Blood & Dirt is also more than a scholarly work. The vivid colours, and double-page archival photographs and paintings are transportive, Davidson's practice as an archivist shines through, as well as the attention to detail of designers Katrina Duncan and Keely O'Shannessy. Additionally, the lyrical writing style makes for engaging storytelling. People living, working, and travelling in Aotearoa New Zealand who pass through the places that Davidson has described and linked to prison labour are called to read this book. For as the author states, "As well as the cityscapes and rural industries that still benefit from the forced labour of prisoners, it is harder and harder to separate everyday working life from the work of prisons" (229). It is undeniable that New Zealand has been shaped by regimes of punishment. The silencing of convictism from the national story has been undone by Davidson. This is a history of *Blood & Dirt,* and it leaves an indelible mark.

Daisy Bailey

Monash University

Rohan Lloyd, *Saving the Reef: The Human Story Behind One of Australia's Greatest Environmental Treasures*

St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 2022; Paperback; 272 pages; ISBN 9780702265754; RRP AUD $32.99

Is there a more quintessentially Australian, a more charismatic, a more evocative symbol for the unravelling climate crisis than the Great Barrier Reef? Although mainstream environmental consciousness in Australia may have had its genesis with the Franklin Dam campaigning of the late-1970s and early-1980s—or, perhaps the campaign to save Victoria's Little Desert in the 1950s and 1960s—as focus has tightened on the worst effects of ocean acidification, sea-level rise, coral bleaching, and coal mines' effluents, the Great Barrier Reef has become cemented as the latest frontier in the sociopolitical sphere. With *Saving the Reef*, Rohan Lloyd provides a much-needed stocktake of the reef's history, with a particular focus on "how the Queensland and Commonwealth governments could reach the decision to drill the Reef for oil, and how the rest of the country reacted to the possibility of the Reef's mineral and petroleum exploitation" (xiv). These are especially important historical questions to ask at a time of climate crisis. Activists need a clear sense of their own history—of past campaigns' successes and failures—and Lloyd has produced a valuable, balanced, and perceptive reading of the Reef with a multitude of lessons.

Saving the Reef opens with the classic story of the grounding of Cook's *Endeavour* in 1770. Lloyd employs this anecdote to imagine the reef's duality: "These two competing conceptions of the Reef, one as frustrating and the other of it as a bastion, motivated the subsequent decades of exploration" (3). Those subsequent European navigators—Matthew Flinders, Phillip Parker King—believed that which could be measured could be exploited. They charted the gaps in the

Reef with increasing precision as the nineteenth century unfolded, laying the groundwork for the permanent settlement that followed.

Throughout the book, Lloyd is keen to highlight the competing visions of the Reef. Ought it to be exploited for its resources, or enjoyed as a tourist destination? This question remains even today at the very heart of the debate over the Reef's future; although, perhaps, in the twenty-first century, the Reef is entangled in increasingly transnational networks of exploitation and enjoyment that further muddy the waters. If the Reef itself was charismatic, so too were certain species who lived there. The Royal Australian Ornithological Union, at the beginning of the twentieth century, pleaded with shooters not to target the Reef's birds (22). In the interwar period, turtles drew the attention of conservationists who bemoaned their overexploitation and impending extinction (37).

Following this robust contextualising, Lloyd then shifts to the "vocal and organised Reef conservation ethic" (65) that began to emerge in the 1960s. These played out across multiple scales. On the one hand were the appeals to tourists not to take "one little piece" (68) of coral. If every one of the tens of thousands of tourists were to collect a skeletal souvenir, the net impact would be devastating. At the same time, objections to large-scale dredging at Ellison Reef were ongoing. This was an ecological fight fought on multiple fronts, and Lloyd captures the chronology and the layered scales. Even in its urgency, the prose is readable and engaging, and, crucially, these histories hold bad actors to account.

Joh Bjelke-Petersen is perhaps the most notorious figure in the twentieth-century history of the Reef. His ascension to the Queensland premiership in 1968 heralded a period in which "geological exploitation of the Reef was far less problematic" (107). But thanks in large part to the resistance of Judith Wright and others, the very worst excesses were avoided. So, too, were the proposed mining schemes too unpalatable for the otherwise conservative *Australian* newspaper. Prime Minister Gorton was resolute, too (119), and, in 1970, the Transport Workers Union "would

impose a black ban on any ship or rig intending to drill in Repulse Bay" (131). These are some of the multiple scales that Lloyd considers so carefully.

Lloyd intersperses the book's main chapters with shorter musings. In the penultimate of these, he offers an arresting insight into the Morrison government's rushed publication of a report on the Reef's apparently ameliorating health during the Covid-19 Pandemic. This cynical action "early exposed the ways in which the government was willing to use scientific material, and even interfere in scientific processes, to suit its agenda" (164). Through an interweaving of these current issues, and those of the past—such as the Royal Commission and the establishment of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, the subjects of the book's final chapters—Lloyd achieves a passionate and hopeful history. There are important lessons in these pages as we grapple with the climate crisis in the twenty-first century.

Harrison Croft

Monash University